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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Where should the U.S. government build the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument Visitors Center?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Made In Haiti

Jordanie Pinquie Rebeca leans forward and guides a piece of suit-jacket wool and its silky lining into a sewing machine, where—bat! bat! bat!—they're bound together to be hemmed.

Business...Page 13

Killer Floods

Rescue workers in Madeira dug through heaps of mud, boulders and debris Sunday, searching for victims buried by floods and mudslides that have killed at least 42 people on the popular Portuguese island.

World...Page 16

Box Office

Martin Scorsese and Leonardo DiCaprio's voyage to "Shutter Island" has landed them at No. 1 at the weekend box office.

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DPS releases identity of drowning victims, details of incidents. PAGE 2

No decision yet on Fernandez's suspension. PAGE 3

'Put Marine Monument visitors center in CNMI, not Guam

» Residents, officials press US Congress to honor presidential proclamation

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Government officials, environmentalists and ordinary citizens are united in asking the U.S. Congress to build a Marianas Trench Marine National Monument Visitors Center in the CNMI, thereby honoring the Jan. 6, 2009 presidential proclamation.

The vast majority of the monument is located in the waters surrounding the CNMI, including its three northernmost islands of Uracas, Maug and Asuncion.

The proclamation, signed by former President George Bush, calls for con-

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Senate panel holds public hearing on MPLT trustee nominee

■ MPLT says local investment now over $70M

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

No member of the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations and other individuals in the Senate chamber testified against Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's nomination of Melchor Mendiola Jr. to the Marianas Public Land

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HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Melchor Mendiola Jr., seated-left, looks on as Rep. Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan) shakes hands with Peter Cruz, right, shortly before the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations' public hearing on Mendiola's appointment as trustee of the Marianas Public Land Trust board in the Senate chamber yesterday afternoon.

'Postcards for Obama' project targets March 31 deadline

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Public school students have until March 31, 2010 to turn in their postcards or letters inviting U.S. President Barack Obama to come to the CNMI.

The target is to send to the White House at least 10,000 postcards or letters

See POSTCARDS on Page 5

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Local

DPS releases identity of drowning victims, details of incidents

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety released yesterday the identity of two men who drowned in separate incidents Saturday at Sugar Dock in Chalan Kanoa and at Tanapag Beach.

DPS spokesman Eric F. David said the victim at Sugar Dock was 54-year-old James Ocha, a Chuukese, while the victim at Tanapag Beach was 61-year-old Juan N. Dowai, a Chamorro.

David said no injuries were observed on Ocha and Dowai and that investigators determined in both cases that the cause of death was drowning.

In the Sugar Dock incident, investigation showed that at 1:25pm a certain Judd Palacios called DPS 911 and reported a possible drowning victim they found at Sugar Dock.

When an on duty Boating Safety officer responded, he noticed medics and police officers were already at the scene.

The victim, identified as Ocha, was covered with a white sheet and was on a stretcher as medics were preparing to transport him to the Commonwealth Health Center.

Further investigation showed that at 1:20pm, Palacios and his boat's crew were exiting the Sugar Dock channel to conduct a check out dive with some customers.

Palacios and his crew came across a Styrofoam box floating southwest of the channel. They pulled alongside the box and noticed nobody fishing around it.

As they were picking up the box, they noticed a rope tied to an object below the water. They pulled the rope and when they got to the end of it they noticed an object tugging on it.

As first, Palacios and his crew thought it was a large fish, but as it surfaced the water, they were surprised to see a motionless body.

From there, they secured the fisherman later identified as Ocha and immediately traveled back to Sugar Dock where they called police.

In the Tanapag case, David said it was at 11:26pm when a certain Che Taitano called DPS 911 and reported a drowning incident.

David said when Boating Safety officers were responding to the scene, they were informed that the victim, later identified as Dowai, was already transported to CHC.

Boating Safety officers' investigation showed that Dowai and his companions—Frankie Agulto and Joe Camacho—launched their boat at the Tanapag ramp at 6pm that day.

Upon reaching Birada Reef, the group started spear fishing north direction.

Later, Agulto got into the boat. He noticed two flashlights in the water south of the boat. When he spotted three lights east of the boat, he assumed that two other fishermen were fishing next to Dowai.

Several minutes later Agulto saw two flashlights almost reaching the inner reef, but he couldn't see the third flashlight.

Agulto started signaling for Camacho's attention. Camacho then came to the boat. Agulto told Camacho they need to look for Dowai because he lost sight of his flashlight.

During their search, they spotted Dowai's fishing box and noticed that his flashlight was on and it was facing towards the sky.

As they continued the search, the found Dowai floating motionless and facing up on the water surface.

Agulto and Camacho secured Dowai in their boat as they rushed to the shore where they called 911.

While waiting for medics and police, Camacho and a bystander performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on the victim. At CHC, a doctor later pronounced Dowai dead.

Boating cops rescue stranded fisherman

Boating Safety officers rescued a man who was stranded while spear fishing along the cliff line south of Banzai Cliff on Saturday at noon.

Anthony B. Roberts, 34, was found in good health, according to the Department of Public Safety spokesman Eric David yesterday.

David said Boating Safety officers spotted Roberts hanging on an orange buoy at 12:07pm.

David said the victim called DPS 911 at 11:33am and reported he was spear fishing along the cliff line south of Banzai Cliff and that the strong current pulled him farther out in the open water.

Roberts told the 911 operator that he could not swim back and decided to hang into an orange buoy.

David said preliminary investigation showed that the victim hiked down on Toru Cliff where he decided to spear fish along the cliff line area.

At the time, Roberts said, the water condition was perfect for fishing.

About 40 minutes later, a strong current came and dragged Roberts to the open water. He tried swimming back toward the cliff line, but the current was too strong.

The victim decided to follow the current. He later saw a Trophy boat about a 100 feet away traveling south direction and waived his orange buoy to get attention.

The boat's crew did not notice Roberts. Minutes later, he took out his cell phone and called 911 for assistance. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Juvenile allegedly burglarizes house in Kagman III

Police arrested over the weekend a male juvenile who allegedly burglarized a house in Kagman III and stole two laptop computers and other items last month.

Superior Court Associate Judge Perry Inos issued the arrest warrant to the boy for burglary and theft and set a $6,000 cash bail.

The juvenile was taken to the court yesterday for his initial appearance.

Department of Public Safety spokesman Eric F. David said yesterday that the burglary at a residence in Kagman III was reported to DPS last Jan. 24.

David said preliminary investigation revealed that the screen of a bathroom window was torn and the sliding window was opened.

Stolen were two laptop computers, a PS2 game, a PSP, a 500GB external drive, and a school bag.

David said follow up investigation conducted by DPS Criminal Investigation Bureau detectives led to the identification of the juvenile.

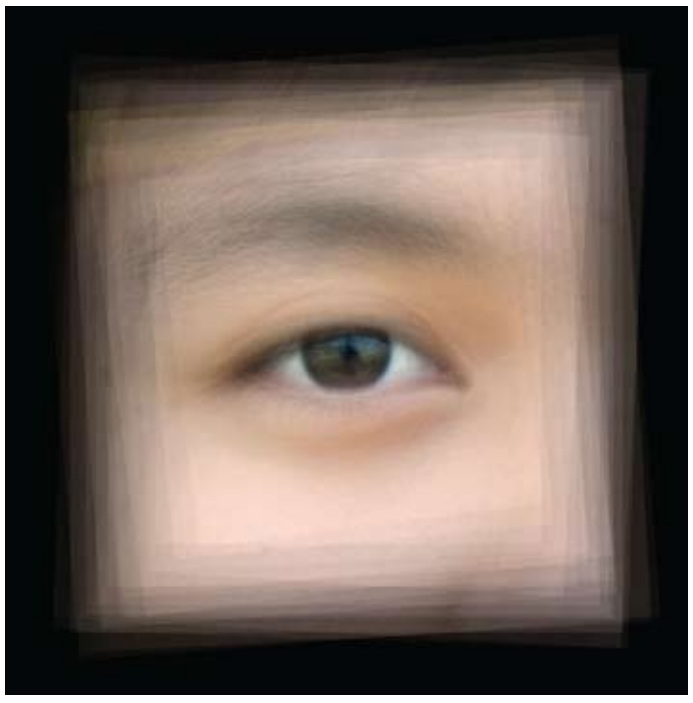
CIB detectives also managed to recover the stolen items, David said.

A male juvenile was also tagged as the suspect in the burglary at a house in Kagman III last Feb. 10. The boy's confession led to the arrest recently of 34-year-old Dawn Maria B. Castro who allegedly received the stolen items such as assorted jewelry, a laptop, and other items. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

The Eye of the Techno-native

As part of the NMI Council for the Humanities-sponsored Community Photography Project, professor Dirk Spennemann has created a striking image that combines the eyes of all participants.

"The current cohort of high school seniors are true techno-natives," Spennemann explained, "they grew up in the digital world and know no other."



"I wanted to capture this using digital photography, which has become one of the symbols of the first decade of the new millennium."

Spennemann from the Institute for Land, Water and Society (Charles Sturt University, Australia) conducted two workshops each in Rota, Saipan, and Tinian. Participants have until end of the week to finalize their submissions.

"I am intrigued by the images I have seen so far," Spennemann said.

All submissions will be showcased on the project website (http://myplacecnmi.org).

The winning entries will be shown in an exhibition at the CNMI Museum for History and Culture. The show will open on March 3 at 6pm.

This project is funded in part by a We the People Grant awarded to the Council by the National Endowment for the Humanities. ***(PR)***

Tourism Tuesday
A weekly update from the Marianas Visitors Authority
Tourism is everybody's business.
Healthy Reefs, Healthy Fish
HEALTHY REEFS
HEALTHY FISH
Did you know that the Yellow Crowned Butterflyfish lives only in the Marianas, nowhere else in the world? It lives in and depends on the reefs for food and shelter. When we take good care of our reefs, we help protect the health of this rare species—a Marianas original.
The amazing sea life and the pristine waters of the Northern Marianas attracted 2,136 divers last month alone. Our beautiful marine life has also gained the Northern Marianas another visit last month by Global Trotters Travel Guidebook, a full color book that introduces dive spots around the world and publishes 45,000 copies annually. The Northern Marianas will be included in their 2010-2011 publication.
Coral Reef Initiative
Northern Mariana Islands
The Yellow Crowned Butterflyfish and other endemic sea life make our island unique. Let's help preserve these natural — and beautiful —tourist attractions!
HAFA ADAI & TIROW WAY
MARIANAS
VISITORS AUTHORITY
This Tourism Tuesday space is provided by Saipan Tribune

No decision yet on Fernandez's suspension

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

It's been over a month since the Board of Regents suspended Northern Marianas College President Dr. Carmen Fernandez, but no timeframe has yet been set as to when a final decision will be issued on the fate of the embattled chief executive officer of the college.

The board resumed its special meeting yesterday but failed to come up with a final decision.

As soon as the meeting was called to order by 4pm, four regents voted to go in executive session for the only agenda of their business—personnel matters.

After almost an hour, the meeting was adjourned and no discussion was made on the floor. Recess was adopted until Thursday.

Fernandez

Board chairwoman Janet Han King refused to comment on Fernandez's suspension pending investigations conducted against her.

It was earlier disclosed that the suspended official is being probed for alleged changing of students' grades and some personnel issues on the college operation.

In an interview with the board personnel committee chair Andrew Orsini, he explained that as soon as the Attorney General's Office completes the investigation, results will be shared with the board committee for review and recommendation to the board.

Until yesterday, none of the regents volunteered to disclose the status of the twin investigations on Fernandez.

Fernandez was hired in 2007 as the college president with $80,000 annual pay and $800 housing allowance monthly. Despite her suspension, she continues to receive her salary and perks as allowed under NMC policy.

Although Fernandez was lauded by various governaning bodies in the college for her work on NMC's accreditation, this didn't stop the board on Jan. 12 to place her under suspension.

Support for her were expressed by the NMC Foundation, NMC Alumni Association, Associated Students of NMC, and the Staff Senate of the college.

It can be recalled that from the original two-year contract provided her, the board in 2008 renewed her employment contract and gave her a new four-year term.

NMC reaffirmed its accreditation in June 2009 after resolving the team recommendations of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Last month, the commission accepted the midterm report submitted by the college last October 2009. However, WASC cited that the "series" of events happening in the college may still affect the accreditation of the institution. The commission will schedule a special visit to NMC anytime soon.

21 of 24 defendants in human smuggling case already pled guilty

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Twenty-one of the 24 defendants in the reported human smuggling case had already entered a guilty plea in federal court and subsequently sentenced to one-year probation.

Those who have not pleaded guilty are Qingmei Cheng, Jian Li, and Shiguang Li.

Jian Li, 32, and Qingmei Cheng, 28, were indicted with 22 counts of attempting to bring aliens to the U.S.

Cheng, is the controversial masseuse of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial. She and Mr. Jian Li, 32, were allegedly behind the attempt to smuggle the 22 Chinese nationals to Guam by boat.

The one remaining passenger, Shiguang Li, is going to trial on Thursday, Feb. 25, assistant U.S. attorney Kirk Schuler told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Schuler said Cheng and Jian Li's trial dates aren't until May 2010.

Last Friday, two more defendants—Weikun Zhong and Yong Jun Li—pleaded guilty to attempted improper entry by an alien.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex Munson accepted the defendants' guilty plea and sentenced both to one year probation.

Munson ordered the defendants to immediately pay a $10 court assessment fee.

The judge said the defendants should be turned over to a federal immigration official immediately for deportation proceedings.

He said if immediate deportation fails and defendants are released pending further immigration proceedings, they must immediately report to the U.S. Probation Office to begin the probation terms.

At the hearing, Schuler and assistant U.S. attorney Eric O'Malley recommended a one-year probation sentence to the defendants.

The defendants' counsels Sean Frink and G. Anthony Long concurred with the U.S. government's recommendation.

The factual basis of the plea agreement stated that on Jan. 5, 2010 the defendants boarded a boat at Smiling Cove Marina on Saipan to carry out their plan to unlawfully enter Guam. They paid money to be smuggled from Saipan to Guam by boat.

The U.S. government filed separate charges against 24 Chinese nationals who were arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents last Jan. 5 for allegedly trying to unlawfully enter Guam from Saipan through a boat.

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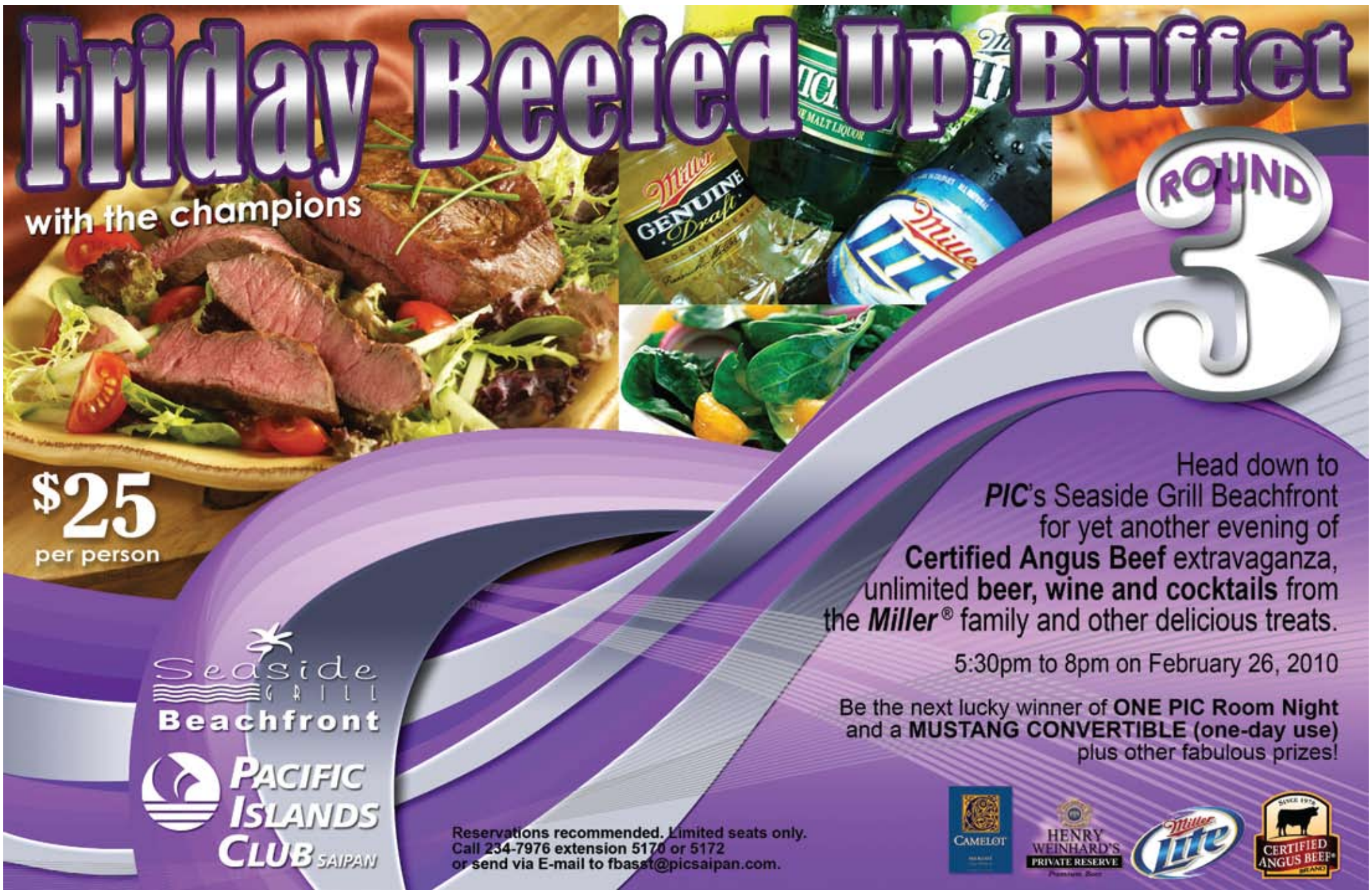
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Froilan, Reyes spar again over reassignment, demotion, hiring of LB staffers

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

House Speaker Froilan C. Tenorio (Cov-Saipan) has reassigned, demoted and hired six individuals in the Legislature, a move which Legislative Bureau director Glenna Reyes said is complex, intrusive, a political interference, pressure, unconstitutional, and will result in additional financial burden to the bureau.

"I respectfully regret that I am unable to fulfill your requests," Reyes said in a letter yesterday to the speaker.

Reyes, however, said that the Legislative Bureau will continue to carry out its constitutional responsibility to the House of Representatives.

The speaker issued separate letters to Reyes on Feb. 16 and 18 about these personnel action, about a month after Tenorio tried to remove Reyes from her own post.

Tenorio

In his Feb. 16 letter, Tenorio asked Reyes to transfer Senate journal clerk Victoria T. Guerrero, an employee of the Legislative Bureau, to the speaker's office to serve as his special assistant.

The speaker, in his Feb. 18 letter to Reyes, advised of his appointment of Troy S. Taisakan, a non-Legislative Bureau employee, as House sergeant-at-arms.

In the same letter, Tenorio appointed long-time House sergeant-at-arms and LB employee Pedro O. Towai as assistant sergeant-at-arms.

Reyes, in a Feb. 22 letter to Tenorio, said if Towai's new appointment is to be effectuated, it will effectively demote Towai.

She said this is "an unjustifiable action that may potentially subject the LB to a future liability."

Moreover, Taisakan's annual salary is $100 higher than Towai's.

"Directing the LB to hire Mr. Taisacan and specifying the amount of salary to be paid implies political interference and pressure," Reyes told Tenorio.

In another letter dated Feb. 22 letter, Tenorio advised Reyes of his appointment of his own office staffers – Geraldine T. Cruz and Elizabeth C. Manglona – as assistant clerks, and for the transfer of their positions and salaries to the Legislative Bureau.

Tenorio advised that Cruz and Manglona, as well as the Senate journal clerk, will take charge of the transcription and construction of the House journals.

The speaker also advised Reyes that he transferred the House journal clerk, also a bureau employee, to the Senate to handle Senate journals.

"Your requests are rather complex for many reasons. The instruction to reassign the Senate journal clerk without consultation with the Senate may appear intrusive into the Senate affairs," Reyes said.

She added that reassigning an employee to Tenorio's office will create the appearance of the bureau employing a personal staff of a member of the Legislature, and it will technically be the case.

Reyes said Tenorio's contention that as House speaker, his office's budgetary allotment should not be charged for the employment of his office's personal staff. He also said that such obligations should be paid by the bureau.

"I respectfully disagreed as this suggestion is tantamount to violating the LB's mandate of the CNMI Constitution. I, once again, offer the constitutional restriction barring the LB from employing personal staff of the members of the legislature," she added.

SENATE

From Page 1

Trust board of trustees, during a public hearing yesterday afternoon on Capital Hill.

Mendiola, who is the House senior legislative assistant, is the son of current Rota Mayor Melchor Mendiola Sr.

EAGI Committee chairman Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian) asked Mendiola to look into Article XI section 4(e) of the CNMI Constitution as it pertains to MPLT.

"I'll look into that," Mendiola told the committee chairman.

Under Article XI section 4(e) of the CNMI Constitution, the directors of the Marianas Public Land Corporation, which is now MPLT, "shall make an annual written report to the people of the Commonwealth describing the management of public lands and the nature and effect of transfers of interests in public land made during the preceding year and disclosing the interests of the directors in Commonwealth land."

Mendiola said he will work with the other board members "to ensure that prudent investments are made."

"I also believe that prudent investments should include reinvesting back into our communities provided that such investments comply with the strict standards of fiduciary care. As much as possible, I will work closely with the other board members and staff, the administration, the legislature and our community leaders and members to ensure that the investment statement policies of MPLT are made in the best interests of its stakeholders," he told senators.

Cruz said the committee has also received written testimony for and against Mendiola's nomination. These would be incorporated in the committee report that would either recommend or reject the nomination for action of the whole Senate.

Just like other Cabinet and board appointees, Mendiola's appointment to the MPLT board needs the approval of the whole Senate.

The committee report is on the Senate's agenda during its session on Friday.

Senate EAGI Committee members Sen. Pete P. Reyes (R-Saipan), Sen. Juan M. Ayuyu (Ind-Rota), Sen. Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota), and Senate Vice President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) separately expressed support to Mendiola's nomination during the public hearing.

They asked Mendiola to ensure that once he is confirmed, he will protect MPLT assets and the interests of the public.

MPLT is tasked with managing money generated from leases of public land. It invests money internationally and locally.

MPLT board chair Phillip Mendiola-Long said money invested locally is a "little over $70 million."

Mendiola-Long testified on behalf of the whole MPLT board of trustees. Other trustees present were Alvaro Santos, Pedro R. Guerrero, and Gregoria Fitial-Omar.

"We'd like to offer our full support to Mr. Mendiola," he said, adding that Mendiola's technical experience would be an asset to the board.

Teresa Kim, counsel for Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, testified on behalf of the Fitial administration, in support of Mendiola.

Acting Public Lands Secretary Oscar M. Babauta and Peter Cruz also testified in favor of Mendiola's nomination.

When asked whether he thinks he will be confirmed by the Senate, Mendiola said: "I believe it will go through."

In his prepared testimony, Mendiola said he is "deeply humbled and honored to have been nominated by the governor to serve as Rota's representative to the Marianas Public Land Trust."

"I am also humbled and appreciative of the support I have received on my nomination throughout the Commonwealth communities and abroad. I accept and take this nomination as my civic duty to serve the Commonwealth to the best of my abilities and knowledge. Should I be confirmed, I will make every effort to ensure that the objectives and purpose of the Marianas Public Land Trust in managing and investing the trust funds with strict standards of fiduciary care are met," he added.

MONUMENT

From Page 1

sultation with the CNMI government on the management and planning of the monument. It also specifically provides for "a program to assess and promote monument-related scientific exploration and research, tourism, and recreational and economic activities and opportunities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands."

CNMI Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan introduced in July 2009 a bill providing for the monument visitors center to be located in the CNMI.

But Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo's introduction of a similar bill this year on a visitors center in Guam has alarmed CNMI residents and officials, saying that the neighboring U.S. territory is taking away from the CNMI what rightfully belongs to it.

As Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) had said, "They have the military bases; now they want our ocean, too," referring to Bordallo's H.R. 4493.

'Fair and reasonable'

Angelo Villagomez, director of the Friends of the Monument, said "many people in the Northern Marianas fought for this and now we are in danger of losing the monument headquarters and facilities to Guam."

Friends of the Monument, the key proponents of the monument leading up to its designation, are asking local residents to provide testimony in support of building a Mariana Trench Visitors Center in the CNMI, rather than Guam.

"The community needs to come together to show their support if we are ever to see the benefits promised to the CNMI by the Bush Administration," Villagomez said in a statement yesterday.

Beautify CNMI! founder and volunteer Cinta Kaipat, in a Feb. 21 letter to Bordallo, expressed hope that the Guam delegate "can come around to supporting HR 3511 because it would start to fulfill the promises made by the Bush Administration and the federal government when the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument was designated on January 6, 2009."

Kaipat said Saipan is over 100 miles closer than Guam to the area of the monument that is a marine protected area.

She said it was the people of the CNMI who petitioned Bush to create the monument, "not our brothers and sisters on Guam."

"It is only fair and reasonable that the social and economic benefits go to the people who requested that it actually be created," she added.

Forms of support

Drumming up support for Sablan's H.R. 3511 has taken many forms, including a letter campaign by the Friends of the Monument, pre-filed CNMI Senate and House resolutions, written testimony, and personal testimony by CNMI entities in Washington, D.C.

Even those who were previously opposed to the Marine Monument are now supporting the building of the visitors center in the CNMI.

Rep. Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan) said establishing the visitors center in the CNMI is part of the monument negotiations, and that the terms of the negotiations should be honored. He said the economic benefits brought by such a marine monument visitors center as originally envisioned by CNMI residents and officials are now in danger of being lost to Guam.

Sen. Juan M. Ayuyu (Ind-Rota) filed Senate Resolution 17-05 supporting Sablan's HR 3511 to establish and operate the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument Visitor Facility in the CNMI.

Senate President Paul A. Manglona (R-Rota) said yesterday that the Senate is expected to adopt the resolution this week.

Rep. Teresita Santos (Ind-Rota) also filed House Resolution 17-6, supporting Sablan's bill of putting and operating a marine monument visitor center in the CNMI. The House is expected to act on the resolution.

Testimony in Washington, DC

On Thursday in Washington, D.C., the U.S. House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife chaired by Bordallo will hold a hearing on Sablan's H.R. 3511 and Bordallo's own H.R. 4493.

The hearing will be at 10am in Washington, D.C. on Thursday.

This will be at 1am on Friday, Saipan time.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial will personally testify in Washington, D.C. to have the monument visitors center built in the CNMI.

"Basically, Governor Fitial will be promoting the Commonwealth's cause for a visitor center as was agreed upon during discussions prior to the designation of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument. While the governor does not object to both the CNMI and Guam having visitor and science centers, Governor Fitial believes that the United States should honor its negotiated obligation to the people of the Commonwealth," Press Secretary Angel A. Demapan told *Saipan Tribune* when asked for comment.

Demapan said Fitial will testify on both bills.

Sablan's H.R. 3511 or the "Marianas Trench Marine National Monument Visitor Facility Authorization Act of 2009" seeks to "authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish and operate a visitor facility to fulfill the purposes of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument."

Bordallo's H.R. 4493 or the "Marianas Trench Marine National Monument Management Enhancement Act of 2010" seeks to "provide for the enhancement of visitor services, fish and wildlife research, and marine and coastal resource management in Guam related to the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument."

Friends of the Monument

In a statement yesterday, the Friends of the Monument said they are opposed to H.R. 4493 because they want to see a Mariana Trench Visitors Center built on Saipan.

They argue that the area of the monument close to Guam does not restrict any fishing or protect any coral reefs or preserve any coastal resources and that only the "Islands Unit" of the monument, an area surrounding the CNMI islands of Uracas, Maug, and Asuncion, protects marine resources.

Agnes McPhetres, vice chair of the Friends of the Monument, will also be testifying in Washington, D.C. on behalf of the group.

McPhetres, in a statement yesterday, said Bordallo's H.R. 4493 seeks to provide research and enforcement dollars to the Government of Guam even though the monument does not protect any fish, wildlife, or any other living creature within 500 miles of Guam.

"If you read the monument proclamation, the area of the monument that extends close to Guam only restricts future seabed mining of the substrate at the bottom of the Mariana Trench. It makes no sense to house the management of the biological resources of the monument on Guam when they are here (Northern Mariana Islands). It would appear that Guam is asking for federal dollars to manage resources under the jurisdiction and within the borders of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands," she said.

Letters needed

The Friends of the Monument are asking the community to provide testimony for Thursday's hearing through letters and e-mails addressed to Bordallo, the Subcommittee's chairwoman. The group also asks that copies of all letters be emailed to Sablan so that he can enter them into the official record.

Each letter should give a short introduction of the author, explain their interest in the monument, and specifically request that the Subcommittee support H.R. 3511.

Letters should also ask for a Mariana Trench Visitors Center to be built in the CNMI, the Friends of the Monument said.

Letters for Representative Sablan's office can be emailed to Paula Bermudes-Castro at paula.bermudes-castro@mail.house.gov or faxed to (202) 226-4249, and must be received by Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2010.

Merrill Lynch: Money managers performed well in 22 years

The investment consultant of the NMI Retirement Fund said its money managers have performed well since its inception more than 22 years ago..

Merrill Lynch vice president/financial advisor Kirk H. Taniguchi reported during yesterday's regular meeting held at Hyatt Regency Saipan that to date the Fund's total investments grew $335 million.

He revealed that since the program started in March 1987, an initial $18.5 million was put in its investment fund which grew to a little bit over $335 million as of December 2009.

"Performance has been good on the part of the money managers…but it is in terms of uncontrollable net cash flow that we're seeing a concern because more money has been taking out from the investment fund," Taniguchi told the trustees in his presentation, adding that the continuous drawdown in the fund is not a sustainable investment program that will help its long-term solvency.

Out of the 22-year period of the investment fund, the financial advisor disclosed that there were only five years in which the Fund posted a loss in its investment earnings from 1987.

This means that 16 out of the 22 years have all posted positive investment earnings.

"You cannot take more money out than put in [the Fund] and expect that the Fund would continue to be around for the next 20 or 30 years. You have to put money into the Fund in order to survive," he pointed out.

Taniguchi said money managers generated investment earnings of $356.8 million in the over 22 years of handling the assets portfolio.

He claimed that for the past years, they have been able to money managers outperformed its strategic targets despite some challenging investment years.

It was in 2008 when the Fund recorded its biggest investment loss.

'Percentile rank'

The financial advisor revealed that total portfolio in the three-year trailing period outperformed by 11 percentile; 1.4 percentile in the five-year trailing; 0.7 percentile in seven-year trailing; and 0.2 percentile in the 10-year trailing.

He reported that from 1988 to 1998, the Fund increased in value in almost every year.

It was in 1999 when cash outflow was recorded each and every year. ***(Moneth G. Deposa)***

POSTCARDS

From Page 1

from Public School System students by April.

Betty Miller, the coordinator for the "Postcards for the President Campaign," said yesterday that the original intention was to invite Obama to also come to the CNMI when he, first lady Michelle Obama and their daughters Malia and Sasha visit Guam on March 19, on his way to Indonesia and Australia.

But she said since the president's visit to Guam has already been set, a trip to the CNMI may be impossible so the "postcards" campaign targets a future trip by the president to the Commonwealth.

"It could be a postcard or a letter. We leave that up to each school. We are aware that the president reads 10 letters every single day from the public and if one of those letters is from our students in one day, and because we plan to have 10,000 letters sent, the possibility of the president reading our cards or letters is high," Miller told *Saipan Tribune*.

The postcards campaign is a joint project between PSS and Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP).

Miller, who is the vice principal of San Vicente Elementary School, said Education Commissioner Dr. Rita Sablan and Board of Education chair Lucy Blanco-Maratita have agreed to assist San Vicente Elementary School in encouraging all schools in the CNMI to participate.

She said each week, schools should turn in to the commissioner's office the postcards and letters already written by students so that schools and the central office could track the progress of the campaign.

"After March 31, these cards will be routed to Congressman Sablan's office in Washington, D.C. He will ask the Secret Service to pick up and deliver these cards to the White House on our behalf," said Miller in an open letter to the public.

Miller is the advisor for the SVES Student Council, which also initiated the project.

She said schools can help by having every student buy or make a postcard for the president.

"Have them include why they think the president should come here, and what they would like to say if they were to meet him," she added.

The project coordinator said the commissioner and board chair thought it might be nice if students include how much they appreciate federal funding, and how it has been used to help schools.

"Together, the children of the CNMI can play a role in making history for our island. We simply have to believe and work hard to achieve," said Miller.

If and when Obama visits the CNMI, he will be the first sitting U.S. president to ever set foot in the CNMI.

The highest ranking U.S. official to set foot in the CNMI's capital of Saipan is former President George H.W. Bush, when he was still vice president to former President Ronald Reagan. Bush flew to Saipan on his way to a six-day visit to China in October 1985.

CNMI senators passed a resolution formally inviting Obama to also visit the Commonwealth, which is about 30 minutes away from Guam.

Senators, in passing Sen. Pete P. Reyes' (R-Saipan) Senate Resolution 17-03, said it will be a "great honor" and an "extraordinary privilege" to have Obama pay an official visit to the CNMI while he is in the region.

They said a presidential visit will bring to the fore issues critical to the CNMI, including the recent federalization of its immigration, the military buildup in Guam that will also impact the CNMI, and the creation of the Marianas Trench National Monument and the authorization for a visitor center in the region.

There's no word yet from the White House regarding the CNMI Senate resolution.

Rep. Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan) also introduced House Resolution 17-5, officially inviting Obama to visit the CNMI, but the House has yet to act on the resolution. The House will hold a session today.

DISCONNECTION NOTICE

IT&E would like to remind its customers that payments not received by close of business on February 23rd, will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00 p.m. on that day. To prevent temporary suspension, customers must pay their bills on or before February 23rd.

THIS WILL BE THE ONLY NOTIFICATION IT&E CUSTOMERS WILL RECEIVE*.

* You have the right to dispute this notice. You must state your claim in person or in writing no later than February 23rd. You must pay any amount not in dispute to avoid disconnection. Payment denotes acceptance of all charges.

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REGENTS COUNSEL, OPA DISAGREE

NMI code of ethics not applicable to NMC board

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Two interpretations of a law were presented to the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents yesterday on whether the code of ethics provisions in the CNMI Constitution applies to the college or not.

According to Board of Regents legal counsel Atty. Jesse Borja, the CNMI Code of Ethics is not applicable to the board—a position countered by Office of Public Auditor Atty. Nancy Gottfried.

"It is my opinion that the code of ethics for NMC is one of those items that falls under the autonomy of NMC in the administration of its affairs," Borja said after the more than an hour-long presentation.

In acknowledging the disagreement from the OPA lawyer, Borja said it is the court that can ultimately make the final decision.

Borja cited that the same position is also the interpretation of the previous NMC board, which acknowledged the separation of its code of ethics policy with that of the CNMI code of ethics.

The board counsel even recommended the adoption and creation of the board's own code of ethics policy.

However, the idea of adopting its own code of ethics separate from the NMI code of ethics may not happen soon as the chairwoman also vocally countered the legal counsel's interpretation and opinion.

Saipan Tribune learned that Borja's code of ethics presentation was in response to a request made by chairwoman Janet Han King.

"I respectfully disagree that the NMI code of ethics is not applicable to board of regents. We swore to uphold Commonwealth law, which includes the CNMI Code of Ethics for those who are considered public officials of the CNMI government," King told *Saipan Tribune*.

Borja, during the presentation, explained in detail the specifics of the board's policy 1019 where the 12 main responsibilities of the regents are indicated and the board's "conflict of interest code" cited in policy 1022.

Among the 12 responsibilities cited in NMC board policy, Borja specifically highlighted the items that are directly involved in the "conflict of interest" of members. Among them are the resistance to every temptation and outside pressure to use their position as a community college board member to benefit either themselves or any other individual or agency.

He also emphasized the policy mandates about disclosing any and all relationships that may be perceived by constituent groups as influencing judgment pertaining to any issue before the board. Reportable relationships shall include but not limited to blood relationships, current or former professional associations, and personal friendships.

According to policy 1022, the NMC shall adopt a conflict of interest code which shall apply to all governing board members and designated employees of the college. It is in the same policy that indicated that the regents shall file annual statement of financial interest "in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Commonwealth Government Ethics Code Act of 1992."

Last Dec. 30, Borja interpreted a law that barred practicing attorneys to become a regent in the height of King's nomination to the chairmanship of the board. The Attorney General later issued an opinion stating it was an erroneous interpretation.

'Competent'

Borja, in response to the request of King to conduct the code of ethics presentation, described himself as competent to do the job.

"The chair of the board asked me if I would be willing to conduct a workshop on the code of ethics. I felt that I was competent enough to do so I agreed…" Borja told the media.

As to the timing of the requested workshop, Borja doesn't want to speculate. He admitted the "broadness" of the NMI constitutional laws.

"I told them that it's a broad statement but in particular, they have the responsibility to faithfully discharge their duties as NMC Board of Regents," he said, adding that the constitution part was what he addressed to the board because it mandates an autonomous board of regents in the administration of its affairs.

Borja believes that whatever it does in terms of code of ethics, NMC should be guided by that constitutional mandate requiring an autonomous NMC.

NMC, Borja disclosed, has a code of ethics policy with regards to the disclosure of financial statements as required by OPA.

KILILI AT NMC CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Delegate Greg "Kilili" Sablan poses for a photo with students and staff of the Northern Marianas College's Upward Bound Program during a visit to the program's open house at NMC on Thursday.

OAG issues e-mail scam warning anew

Last week a CNMI resident forwarded to the Office of the Attorney General an unsolicited e-mail he received in his e-mail account claiming he had won the 2010 South African Lottery.

This is a variation of a known scam. In this e-mail, the sender is attempting to open a dialogue to get the resident to cooperate with the scammer. In this type of scam, victims are told they have won a lottery, but have to pay taxes, transfer fees, or provide bank account or credit card information in order to receive the "winnings." It will not end well if the resident chooses to continue to talk with the scammer. The scammer will attempt to steal the resident's identity or money or both.

To avoid being scammed, please remember that:

1. If something seems too good to be true, it usually is;
2. You cannot win a contest if you have not entered it;
3. Generally, to enter a lottery, you must first purchase a ticket;
4. You NEVER have to pay to collect winnings from a legitimate lottery. You pay taxes AFTER you receive the winnings;
5. Lotteries do not notify you; not by email, not by phone, not by mail. When you win a lottery, YOU notify the lottery. ***(source: http://www.consumerfraudreporting.org/lotteries.php)***

The Office of the Attorney General would like to remind residents of the CNMI to be wary of providing personal or financial information to unknown people on the Internet. On the Internet, if someone says you won a lottery you didn't enter, hit "delete" as fast as you can. ***(PR)***

Enroll for Courses at NMT!

Visit the Northern Marianas Trades Institute and enroll in the courses beginning now. Learn a trade and get a good paying job. Tuition aid is available and even a job. Remember all you need to enroll is a desire to learn.

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GED program is also being offered to non-high school graduates. Take this opportunity to get your high school diploma.

Parents: Please encourage your sons and daughters to attend.

Call 235-6684 today!

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB10-RDLNR-048

SUBMISSION: MARCH 16, 2010 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) UTILITY TRACTOR - CIF ROTA FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, ROTA BRANCH"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB IS DUE ON **MARCH 05, 2010. CLOSE OF BUSINESS** AND SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO **MR. JOEY ANTHONEY QUITUGUA**, ACTING RESIDENT DIRECTOR AT TEL (670) 532-9494/5 OR BY FAX TO (670) 532-0520 OR E-MAIL TO **dlnr@pticom.com.**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **MELCHOR A. MENDIOLA**
MAYOR OF ROTA

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

/s/ **JOEY ANTHONY QUITUGUA**
ACTING RESIDENT DIRECTOR
DLNR, ROTA

Procurement And Supply
CNMI Government
INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: ITB10-DPS-062
Submission/Opening Date: March 18, 2010 • Time: 10:00 a.m.

"PURCHASE OF TWO (2) POLICE PACKAGE MOTORCYCLES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY-SAIPAN"

Copies of the specifications may be picked up at the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base Dr., Saipan, during regular working hours.

This is a Federally funded project; as such, **local preference is not available**, because its use is prohibited by Federal Law granting funding for this project.

/s/ SANTIAGO F. TUDELA
Commissioner of Public Safety

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, P&S

Procurement And Supply
CNMI Government
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP: RFP10-DPL-064
Submission: March 23, 2010 • Time: 2:00 P.M.

"OFFICE SPACE RENTAL ON SAIPAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS"

Copies of the specifications may be obtained at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply in Lower Base during regular working hours.

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to Mr. Oscar M. Babauta, Acting Secretary, Department of Public Lands by fax to (670) 234-3755, **no later than march 12, 2010, close of business**.

Preference is available to U.S. citizens or permanent residents as per Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118 and must be submitted with the proposal if preference is claimed.

The lessor must comply with Public Law 15-23, Article 5, section 8652 (A) – (D)

/s/ OSCAR M. BABAUTA
Acting Secretary of DPL

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, P&S

Procurement And Supply
CNMI Government
INVITATION TO BID

ITB NO.: ITB10-DPS-063
Submission/Opening Date: March 18, 2010 • Time: 10:30 a.m.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) DUI MOBILE TRAILER FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY–TINIAN POLICE TRAFFIC SECTION"

Copies of the specifications may be picked up at the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base Dr., Saipan, during regular working hours.

This is a Federally funded project; as such, **local preference is not available**, because its use is prohibited by Federal Law granting funding for this project.

/s/ SANTIAGO F. TUDELA
Commissioner of Public Safety

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, P&S

MBA defends Academic Challenge Bowl title

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Marianas Baptist Academy successfully defended its Academic Challenge Bowl title after besting seven other schools in the 2010 edition of the competition last Saturday.

The Saipan Southern High School Chapter of the National Honor Society hosted the 8th Annual Academic Challenge Bowl for the junior high school division last Saturday.

The purpose of the competition is to promote scholastic achievement and to provide a venue for junior high school students to compete amongst their peers.

In the intense competition, 40 students entered the elimination round from eight public and private middle schools on island.

MBA emerged with the highest points garnered from the questions that covered categories like Math, Science, English, Social Studies, music, sports, and computer.

The winning team was made up of five members—Won Woo Choi, Alina Ishikawa, Hye Young Oh, Kanata Omori, and Denise Samson. They were coached by Le'ah Murphy. For their hard work, organizers awarded the champion team a group as well as individual trophies.

Prior to the contest, the MBA team spent two months preparing for the Academic Challenge Bowl.

Oh, in an interview with *Saipan Tribune*, expressed the group's satisfaction on how event turned out.

"We're so happy and grateful to God for giving us two consecutive years to hold the title," the eighth grader said, adding that all their sacrifices and hard work once again paid off.

This year marked the eighth year of the contest and the second and last time for Oh to participate in the middle school level.

Oh, however, expressed willingness to continue her involvement in the competition by entering the high school division next year.

Finishing second to MBA was Grace Christian Academy with members Richard Aldan, Kelly Ann Hofscheider, Dong Ha Lee, Katrina Punzalan, and Hanako Eunice Shirata.

Second runner-up was Saipan International School led by Nuri Gutzweiller, Kennedy Izuka, Hunter Jewell, Andrew Johnson, and Bill Song.

Fourth place went to Hopwood Junior High School with team members Jill Arada, Harold Aranda, Jinky Kintaro, Ezra Lizama, and Tyra Santos.

The eight schools that competed in the preliminary rounds included Calvary Christian Academy, GCA, Ladera International School, Rota Junior High School, Chacha Oceanview Junior High, Hopwood, MBA, and SIS.

MAFEA to induct 2010 officers on March 13

The Marianas Association of Filipino Engineers and Architects will hold its 2010 induction of officers and board of directors on March 13.

While the venue of the induction ceremony has yet to be determined, MAFEA is calling all members of MAFEA—old and new—to attend the event.

For more information call, text, or e-mail Hector Sevilla at 287-7095/elouieja@yahoo.com, Jun Liberato at 235-1314/jjliberato@yahoo.comm and Lito Marquez at 286-6337/ cjmarquez2004@yahoo.com. ***(PR)***

IUMC kids receive Valentine from Jesus

During "Time with Our Children" Immanuel United Methodist Church children received a huge Valentine with "I LOVE U. I LOVE U. GUESS WHO?"

After children guessed and guessed, Lay Pastor Millie Carroll, asked Grace Dowez to show the envelope it came in. Dowez took out one large clue enclosure "I love you most!" With children still uncertain, Dowez took out another large note that revealed who sent it—"Jesus."

Carroll's message to the children was "We in turn need to show our love and care for people in trouble, ones without food, and those who are sick. The children then went to Sunday School with Sol Corpuz (and helpers Serafina Rogoyawa, Melissa Borja. and Grace) to make Valentine's for CHC patients.

Uncertain how many would be in the hospital, the children made a bunch. One for each patient with enough to give as thank yous to the nursing stations and pharmacies for all they do to care for all of us.

It was later disclosed that Jesus did have a helper with the beautifully made Valentine—Dowez herself.

The Valentine will now be mailed to Cyndy Tice, recently retired nursing instructor and IUMC's greatly missed long-term lay leader.

Immanuel United Methodist Church warmly welcomes all to worship services and Sunday School at 9am. IUMC in Chalan Kanoa is on Chalan Kanoa Street and Barbara Avenue (east of Town Center and Beach Road, near Mount Carmel Catholic Church).

SOL CORPUZ
After carefully unfolding, IUMC children show the congregation their mystery Valentine. From left, Helen Carhill, Grace Dowez (behind the valentine and signs), and Mary Jane Polido Domingo with Lay Pastor Millie Carroll.

For more information, contact Lay Pastor Millie Carroll at 322-6158. For church van transportation, call Cris Lumanlam at 234-8107. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation for Bid
PSS IFB 10-008

"Public Sale of Used Electrical Materials on Tinian"

The CNMI Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the "Sale of Used Electrical Equipment such as Transformers, Meter Boxes, Copper Wire and High Tension Wire". PSS no longer needs equipment following the completion of an Electrical Upgrade Project on the grounds of Tinian Jr/Sr. High School.

A listing of Equipment for sale may be obtained by calling the PSS Procurement Property & Inventory Control Officer Alkantro Sarapio, PSS Property & Inventory Control Officer on 237.3068 or 483.9118. Prospective Buyers may also contact Mr. Sarapio to arrange for an inspection of the equipment on Tinian.

Bidders may bid on some, or all, items. Bids should be placed in a sealed envelope marked **"PSS IFB 10-008"** containing one (1) original and two (2) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building no later than March 10, 2010 at 10:30 AM.

/s/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/s/ Robert Florian
P&S Officer

ATTENTION CNMI GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND RETIREES

As of January 1, 2010, your Group Life Insurance Benefit offered through the CNMI Government is provided by Individual Assurance Company.

All eligible CNMI Government employees and retirees are invited to the IAC office of Don Barcinas to re-enroll. The office will be open 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. every day this week.

You must re-enroll by this Friday, February 26, 2010.

Check with your Human Resources office to see if they have scheduled an on-site enrollment meeting with IAC.You may also re-enroll through your Human Resources office.

Donald C. and Tina O. Barcinas
General Agents, Individual Assurance Company
Cabrera Center, First Floor, Suite 106
Beach Road, Garapan
670.234.0960

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A LOOK AT PAST CAMPOREES

Anatahan Taga Adventure 1997

By OSCAR C. CAMACHO
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Editor's Note: The author is the Troop Committee chairman for the NMI Boy Scouts. As part of celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America, the Saipan Tribune *is publishing a series of articles featuring past camporees and activities of the local boy scouts program. The following is an excerpt of a longer article.*

Mr. Jess Omar instructs on gun safety. Guns will never be pointed at anyone, loaded or unloaded. Three guns were held up. Justice Villagomez holds one, Jess Omar one while instructing, Ray Kapileo holds a regular 22. There are a regular 22, single shot rifle, and a high-powered rifle called a 223.

"Another good law of the jungle, according to Mr. Omar, and we're not from the jungle, is to minimize talking, drink a lot of water even when you're not thirsty." Six adults with the three guns and all the boys are going. While the preparation is going on, there is to our right, in the ocean, a thin speck, which appears to be moving our way. "It's the MV *Anatahan*," exclaims Mr. Saurez. "They're bringing the fruit bats." The exchange will be a box-full of amos and a card pack. Everybody waits for the arrival of the villagers. The adults talk and talk and laugh. A group prepares betel nut exchanges, some boys play with the giant crab, and others use the binoculars looking at the small boat. The boat did not come and the hunt must continue.

The boys are told to line up. The trail is defined and the object is to kill every goat they can as part of the Fish and Wildlife Eradication Program. The trail will lead them to the beach. Fifteen boys are going. They are numbered. The boys are told to be careful, slow down in Chamorro and Carolinian. The boys followed the adults led by Mr. Omar followed by Judge, Fly, Larry and the Crab, Congressman, and the Lizard. Congressman Rosiky with Emory and Ben Pua chases a lizard roaming around the tents looking for something to eat. The cold-blooded animal got itself tied to a tree where we proudly fly our flags. The scouts, Justice Villagomez, Mr. Omar, Mr. Ilo, Doctor Hofschneider and the lawyers are all gone. The Congressman, Scout coordinator, and the remaining adults sat talking until something provoked the Congressman's attention. Mr. Ben Pua and Emory started chasing a humongous "kaluf" and it appeared that they were having difficulty dealing with the lizard. A stick held in hand made one of them brave in the chase, but the Congressman, having skillful touch and moving quickly grabbed the amphibian by the tail and held it proudly. He bid it to the ground and then grabbed its head, tied with a string and found the tree hoisting up our flag an ideal place for the lizard.

HS Mock Trial competition this weekend

The 12th Annual High School Mock Trial competition will be held this Friday and Saturday at the Guma Hustisia in Susupe.

Nine teams from Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are participating in this extracurricular program in which team members play roles in contrived trials to learn new skills and vie for an opportunity to travel and compete against the winning teams from other states at the National Mock Trial Tournament in Philadelphia in May.

Mock Trial is an academic competition simulating lower-court or Superior Court trials. Students from different schools receive the same hypothetical court case consisting of the charges and basis of the case, rules that must be followed, and affidavits of each of the testifying or potentially testifying witnesses. After several months of preparation as witnesses and attorneys the competitors litigating skills are put to the test against those of other schools' teams, when for example one high school's prosecution team will be pitted against another school's defense team.

The public is invited to attend the competition sponsor by the CNMI Bar Association. It will be held in rounds, at 9am, 12 noon, and 3pm on Friday, Feb. 26, with the championship beginning 8:30am Saturday. Local attorneys serve as competition judges and evaluators; the CNMI Judiciary volunteers its facilities and staff members' time for the annual event.

The National High School Mock Trial Championships began in 1984. This first competition consisted of teams from Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. The competition since has grown and now is considered to be an All-State tournament. Each year, various participating states around the country take turns hosting the tournament. Last year's winners were from John Adams High School in South Bend Indiana.

For further information, contact Jim Stowell at 236-9716. ***(PR)***

Can you identify

THE NMI Council for the Humanities, in collaboration with the *Saipan Tribune*, is running a series of photographs in this section every Tuesday and is inviting the public to identify the persons or places featured in this section.

If you can identify the persons or places in the picture, please contact the NMI Council for the Humanities by telephone (235-4785), via email (photo@nmihumanities.org) or by visiting the Council's office located in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai. These images are from the Council's Historic Photograph Database which is currently being developed to help document the history and cultures of the CNMI.

The persons featured in last week's photo have been identified as, left, Maria Hocog Santos Deleon Guerrero and Maria "Marakita" Ilo Itibus. Identified by Jesus S. Santos, Lino M. Olopai, and Joaquina Aguon.

Community meeting to discuss Marpi homestead development

The proposed Marpi homestead development will be discussed tomorrow, Feb. 24, beginning 6pm in a community meeting at the Carolinian Utt in Garapan.

The Department of Public Lands began the project last year with the clearing of unexploded ordnance and forest areas through funding provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Brownfields Program

On Wednesday representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Public Lands will be present to provide information and updates on the project, and also to receive feedback from the community.

Organizers said concerns from the community have begun to be voiced, for example, regarding the progress of revegetation efforts, the appearance of invasive vines, and the future development or protection of one of the most beautiful and historically significant areas on Saipan. ***(PR)***

'John Gonzales Live' features education

John Gonzales Live on KSPN Channel 2 tomorrow will feature "Invest in Your Future!—Career and Trades (CTE) Education Month. What is PSS Doing to Educate our Students Towards Career and Trades Occupation for the 21st Century in an island economy?" Guests will include Jessica Barcinas-Taylor, PSS CTE Coordinator; Karen Borja, Principal, Marianas High School; Tyce Mister, Cooperative Education Teacher, MHS; Harold Easton, Fine Arts Teacher, MHS; and Eric Magofna, Vice Principal, Kagman High School. Call 287-4230, Text 285.META (6382), or email johngonzales@pticom.com for your comment and/or question. ***(PR)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Feb. 23, 1999

Korean arrivals in positive territory

With the slight improvement of visitor arrivals last month, the Marianas Visitors Authority is hopeful that this will signal the much awaited recovery of the island's tourism economy. Based on the latest statistics, visitor arrivals registered only a 10 percent decline totalling 43,706 in January compared to the same period last year. Likewise, Japan, the island's main market, posted a 10 percent drop. Since late last year, Japan Airlines has been carrying out its own promotional campaign to increase visitor arrivals in the Northern Marianas. JAL has pledged to help market the CNMI in Japan as arrivals continue to drop since the Asian financial crisis begun more than a year ago.

Plan for family care office quashed

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio has tasked Department of Community and Cultural Affairs and the Office of Women's Affairs to implement family care activities after he disapproved a proposal seeking to create an office that will develop the first family child care plan in the commonwealth due to lack of funds. According to the governor, CNMI's shrinking cash resources is preventing him from establishing the Family Child Care Council, which under the proposed measure will design a program for adequate care and protection of children. Tenorio told the Legislature "creating and funding a new Council to develop and oversee a Family Child Care Plan is not a realistic solution at this time when the Government is under a financial crisis."

Feb. 23, 2000

Trial on bribery charges vs CUC's Sablan begins

Jury trial on the bribery case against Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board member Benjamin A. Sablan begins today at the U.S. District Court. U.S. Assistant Attorney Alan L. Lane will present 12 witnesses during the trial for the prosecution. On the other hand, the defense has lined up five witnesses on the case, including Philippine Sen. Ramon Revilla. Mr. Sablan has been indicted before the federal court for allegedly receiving kickbacks amounting to $4,800 from a recruitment company in connection with the hiring of 12 Filipino contract workers for the utilities firm four years ago. He pled not guilty to three counts of bribery during an arraignment yesterday morning. During the time the crime was allegedly committed, CUC and the CNMI government obtained more than $10,000 in federal grants.

Business groups back labor reforms

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel Association of Northern Mariana Islands and the Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association yesterday threw their strong support for the proposed Omnibus Labor and Business Reform Act of 2000. House Speaker Ben Fitial introduced House Bill 12-039 primarily to allow economic growth in the CNMI and create a business-friendly environment. Saying businesses are in favor of the removal of protectionist restrictions on businesses, Chamber president Lynn Knight said the proposal will help open the doors to investment which the island economy badly needs at this time.

Feb. 23, 2001

Moves on to keep PBDC afloat

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio disclosed plans yesterday to meet with representatives of other Pacific island nations to discuss plans to keep the Pacific Basic Development Council afloat amid financial problems. The governor together with Special Assistant Mike Malone left yesterday for Washington DC. During the trip, Mr. Tenorio will also attend the Annual Winter meeting of the National Governors Association. In an interview with reporters, Mr. Tenorio said a meeting with governors of Guam and American Samoa, has been scheduled to discuss the future of the PBDC. "We're going to talk about the PBDC and what actions are needed to be done," said the governor.

Due to funding shortage MVA to fine-tune promotional programs

Forced to work with a limited budget equivalent to its Fiscal Year 1999 funding, the Marianas Visitors Authority may just turn to more crafty and creative ways of promoting the islands. With only $6,035,469 earmarked for the government body's operation for the third straight year, one wonders what little money the MVA has left for programs to attract visitors to Saipan, Tinian and Rota. In a board meeting yesterday, MVA Board Chair David M. Sablan said board members should stop using "lack of funds" as an excuse.

Flame Tree Art Festival to hold poster, essay contest

The 2010 steering committee for the 29th Annual Flame Tree Art Festival will hold a poster-making and essay contest for all public and private schools from elementary, junior high, and high school students.

Participants must come up with a poster design and/or essay based on this year's theme "Weaving" cultures and art for social and economic opportunities.

The poster competition is open to elementary, junior high, and high school students. Entries must have an 81/2x14 (full color) dimension with the student's name printed and signed, including the name of school and grade level of participant on the lower right side of the poster.

The essay contest, meanwhile, is open to elementary, junior high, and high school students. Elementary school students should submit a half page, hand written essay, while junior high and high school entries should submit a one-page essay, double space, with Times New Roman as font.

Each school is requested to select one poster and one essay prior to submission to the Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture no later than March 15, 2010 before 4:30pm for overall judging. Winners for the poster and essay contest will be awarded a monetary prize payable to the respective school PTSA.

For more information, call the Commonwealth Council for Arts and Cultures at 322-99982/9983 and look for Vincent M. Rabauliman, acting executive director/chairman of the 29th Flame Tree Arts Festival. ***(PR)***

Green Meadow congratulates PGFC winners

Green Meadow School would like to extend its congratulations to all participants and winners of the PGFC competition held last Feb. 6 at San Vicente Elementary School.

The school's management would like to express its sincere appreciation to all the parents, guardians, and teachers who worked and guided the students closely before and during the competition.

"To all our participating students, congratulations and keep up the good work. As always, we are all very proud of you. Thank you," it said.

Below are the school's winners of the recent PGFC competition:

Above, Green Meadow winners in the grade 3-5 division pose for a photo.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Right, Green Meadow winners in the K-5 to grade 2 division pose for a photo.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

KINDER 5 - GRADE 2 DIVISION

First Place

Jhanylin Marielle Cruz	Grade 1	Humorous Interpretation A
Kristina Crisostomo	Grade 1	Humorous Interpretation B
Miles Navarro	Grade 1	Readers Forum A
Ashley Reganit	Grade 1	Readers Forum B
Angel Mae Oropesa	Grade 2	Choral Speaking A
Trina Marie Rena	Grade 2	Choral Speaking A
Kimvherly Dela Cruz	Grade 2	Choral Speaking A
Art Vincent Alfeche	Grade 2	Choral Speaking A
Ashley Regant	Grade 2	Choral Speaking A
Alyson Red Camacho	K5	Choral Speaking B
Princess Cassey Melchor	K5	Choral Speaking B
Nicole Sune	K5	Choral Speaking B
Desiree Maratas	K5	Choral Speaking B
Taliyah Bocago	K5	Choral Speaking B

First Place

Robin Agbayani	Grade 2	Choral Speaking B
Isaiah Miguel Mallari	Grade 2	Choral Speaking B
Anthony Kevin Agulto	Grade 2	Choral Speaking B
Ardel Austin Ciolo	Grade 2	Choral Speaking B

Third Place

Isaiah Miguel Mallari	Grade 2	Humorous Interpretation B

Fourth Place

Jhanylin Marielle Cruz	Grade 1	Choral Speaking B
Miles Navarro	Grade 1	Choral Speaking B
Chelsea Garcia	Grade 1	Choral Speaking B
Mikee Mendoza	Grade 1	Readers Forum Master
Christian Edward Mendoza	Grade 1	Humorous Interpretation A
Natalie Hirshbein	Grade 2	Duo Interpretation B
Angel Mae Oropesa	Grade 2	Duo Interpretation B
Aldraine Angelo Galang	Grade 1	Readers Forum MC
Aldraine Angelo Galang	Grade 1	Dramatic Interpretation B

Fifth Place

Joshua Alfred	K5	Dramatic Interpretation A
Christian Palattao	Grade 1	Duo Interpretation A
Christian Edward Mendoza	Grade 1	Duo Interpretation A
Radge Vladimir Palma	K5	Duo Interpretation B
Rian Jewel Cadag	K5	Duo Interpretation B

GRADE 3-5 DIVISION

First Place

Pionnah Gregorio	Grade 3	Dramatic Interpretation B
Andrea Monique Agtarap	Grade 3	Duo Interpretation A
Gabrielle Shanikka Flores	Grade 3	Duo Interpretation A

Second Place

Andrea Monique Agtarap	Grade 3	Choral Speaking B
Gabrielle Shanikka Flores	Grade 3	Choral Speaking B
Gelomener Miko Narciso	Grade 3	Choral Speaking B
Robin Matthew Reyes	Grade 3	Choral Speaking B
Keandre Deseo	Grade 4	Impromptu B
Ezekiel Alfred	Grade 4	Choral Speaking A
Keandre Deseo	Grade 4	Choral Speaking A
Joshua Saturno	Grade 4	Choral Speaking A
Amelito Dalusong	Grade 4	Choral Speaking A
Joshua Saturno	Grade 4	Duo Interpretation B
Chekaina Coloma	Grade 4	Duo Interpretation B

Third Place

Pionnah Gregorio	Grade 3	Choral Speaking A
Ryan Louis Divino	Grade 3	Choral Speaking A
Franchesca del Pilar	Grade 3	Choral Speaking A
Anniea Saturno	Grade 3	Choral Speaking A
Chekaina Coloma	Grade 4	Choral Speaking B
Mary Grace Briones	Grade 4	Choral Speaking B
Monica Aira Usi	Grade 4	Choral Speaking B
Pascual Eustaquio IV	Grade 5	Readers Forum B

Fourth Place

Ma. Fatima Briones	Grade 5	Choral Speaking B
Danielle Coloma	Grade 5	Choral Speaking B
Ma. Theresa Dalusong	Grade 5	Choral Speaking B
Angela Reganit	Grade 5	Choral Speaking B
Piolo Gregorio	Grade 5	Duo Interpretation A
Zamuel Alfred	Grade 5	Due Interpretation A
Ryan Louis Divino	Grade 3	Duo Interpretation B
Anniea Saturno	Grade 3	Due Interpretation B
Danielle Coloma	Grade 5	Impromptu A

Fifth Place

Justin Andrew Palabay	Grade 4	Readers Forum C
Zamuel Alfred	Grade 5	Readers Forum MD

Commonwealth I Sankattan Siha Na Islas Mariana
Ofisinan I Gubietno
Dipåttamenton I Tano' Pupbliku

NOTISIA POT PRINIPONEN ATKILON TANU PUBLIKU

Segun i lai Publiku 15-2, Seksiona 106, i Depattamention Tanu Publiku ha notitisia todus ni intension para ma-atkilan tanu publiku gi Lower Base, Saipan. Libre i publiku muna` halom hafa hinassoña nu este na planu.

i. I tanu gaige gi Lot No. 038 E 02 ya i minedoñg 6,800 metru kuatdrau, poku mas o`menus. Guaha kopian este na lugat gi Depattamention Tanu para haye malagu umina.

ii. I para u fan atkila i Success International Corporation ni ineluluye as Señor Guo Jun Miao. Guiya lokue sekretariu yan treasurarion i kompania.

iii. I mapropopone na atkilon manegosiu as Señor Miao.

iv. I lugat para bisnis man-areglan kareta yan man-mueba tumobit 24 oras diariamente. I tetminon atkilon para 25 años na tiempu ya siña lokue ma-ekstende para otru 15 años. I tutat atkilon gaige gi pot sientu gi ma-katkula ni marehistra na kompanian man-ebaluan balin tanu.

v. I kopian kontratan atkilon gaige gi Depattamention Tanu gi Joeten Building, Dandan, Bank of Saipan Commercial Building, Luta; yan primet bibienda gi Kings Commercial Bldg. giya Tinian.

vi. I Depattamenton Tanu taya renisibiña kabales na propositu pot atkilon i lugat ni gaige guine na anunsiu.

vii. I Sekcretariun Depattamenton Tanu siña ha resibe nina halum publiku pot este priniponen atkilon, fabot `sino kinentra, antes `sino Måtso ida 8, 2010 gi katkuet offinan tanu giya Saipan, Tinian yan Luta.

ARONGORONGOL REEL AKKILONUL FALÚWEER TOULAP

Sángi Tálil 106 (b) mellól alléghúl toulap 15-2, Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap ekke atotoowow ammataf igha ebwe akkilaaló eghús falúw mellól Seipél, Commonwealth Teel faluwasch Marianas. Schóókka eyoor máfiyeer rebwe isisilong aghiyegh, aweewe, reel pomwol akkilonul ammwelil falúweer toulap me bwal Alléghúl Toualp ye 15-2, e ayoora, lamal aweewe kka rebwe mweiti ngáli milikka ebwe akkatéélo.

i. Pomwol akkilonul falúweer toulap nge ekke bwáári Lot No 038 E 02, eyoor olangaras walabwughúw (6,800) square meters, elapeló ngáre eghús, elo Lower Base, Seipél. Tilighial bwuley yeel nge eyoor mereel Bwulasiyool Falúweer Toulap (Public Lands) ngáre óubwe ghuleey fischi.

ii. Schéschéél schóól akkilon nge Success International Corporation, CNMI Corporation. Samwoolul Corporation nge Guo Jun Miao.

Samwoolul Treasurer/Sekkeretoria nge Guo Jun Miao.

Schóól aweweel akkilon nge Mr. Guo Jun Miao.

iv. Schóól akkilon ebwe ayoora me mwóghutáágheli fasilidóód fengál me leliyel ffééról ghareeta. 24-hours reel towing service shop, me akkááw angaangal.

Tool aighúghúl pomwol akkilon nge ebwe reweigh me limoow ráágh (25 years) me emmwel ebwe sóbwusóbw ngáli bwal seigh me limwoow ráágh (15 yrs)

Pomwol akkilon yeel llól alongal ráágh nge ebwe mwir sángi llapal méél falúw (value of the property) me bwal meeta kka e akkayú llól bwuleey yeel.

v. Tilighial akkilon yeel nge emmwel óubwe bwughi mereel bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap, elo aruwowal pwó (2nd floor) me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building llól Tuturam, Seipél; aruwowal pwó (2nd floor) mellól Bank of Saipan Commerial Building, Luuta; me ngáre mmwal pwo (1st floor) mellól Kings Commercial Building, Tchuluyol.

vi. Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap nge esáál bweibwogh mwo pomwol akkilon ye elo Lower Base, Seipel.

vii. Samwoolul Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap nge ebwe bwughil ischil mángemáng kkaal, aingiingil mereel amweyút mmwal Máálap 8, 2010 mellól Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap iye elo Seipél, Luuta me ngáre Tchúlúyól.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public lands in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot No. 038 E 02, containing an area of approximately 6,800 square meters, more or less, situated in Lower Base, Saipan. A copy of the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands for inspection.

ii. The prospective lessee is Success International Corporation, a CNMI Corporation. The Director of the Corporation is Guo Jun Miao.

The President/Secretary/Treasurer of the Corporation is Guo Jun Miao.

iii. The proposed lease was negotiated by Mr. Guo Jun Miao.

iv. The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of developing and managing a facility with a complete automobile repair shop, 24-hour towing service shop, and related operations.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years, with an option to extend the lease for an additional 15 years.

The proposed annual rental during the term is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property, including existing structure(s).

v. A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; the 2nd floor of the Bank of Saipan Commercial Building, Rota; or the 1st floor of the Kings Commercial Building, Tinian.

vi. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Lower Base, Saipan.

vii. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before March 8, 2010 at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Reforming juvenile detention

Troy Erik Isaac was 12 years old and one week into a court-ordered detention for vandalism when he was sexually assaulted by an older, bigger boy. It would not be the last time. "I was effeminate, thin and looked vulnerable," he says now, 24 years after the fact. "Nobody tells you when you go in, `You better be careful.'"

Isaac, who described himself as a "troubled child," spent the better part of his life in juvenile and adult correctional centers and says that he was raped or sexually abused numerous times. He will tell his story Tuesday to a House panel chaired by Rep. Robert C. Scott, D-Va.

Isaac is not alone. A recent study by the Justice Department reported that roughly 12 percent of minors suffered some form of sexual abuse while in custody, including abuse by staff members. Scott should pay particular attention to two centers in his home state that were identified as having among the highest rates of sexual abuse in the country: the Culpeper Juvenile Correctional Center in Culpeper County and the Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center, just outside Richmond. Backbone Mountain Youth Center in Western Maryland was also among the institutions with the highest rate of abuse.

Scott's hearing helps to keep attention on the problem of sexual abuse of juvenile offenders. But in many ways this problem is already well-known and understood. What is needed is action. Members of Congress should move from talking about the problem to implementing solutions. They could start by reauthorizing the Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act, which requires, among other things, that juveniles and adults be kept apart while awaiting trial or serving sentences. The bill was passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee but has yet to be voted on by the full Senate or considered in the House.

The Justice Department must implement the reforms recommended last summer by the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission. The department will probably miss a June 2010 deadline by which it was supposed to have determined which recommendations to adopt. Corrections officials say that they want to eliminate all manner of sexual abuse in their facilities but argue that they do not have the money to fund all reforms.

These concerns must be taken seriously, especially in these difficult budgetary times, but they cannot be used as an excuse to block progress. After all, it does not cost a cent for the director of a facility to let it be known that sexual abuse by staff or offenders will not be tolerated. It does not cost a cent, but it could save a child from the horrors that Isaac describes.

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©2010 THE AUGUSTA CHRONICLE 2/19
CLASS, PAY ATTENTION: MICHELLE OBAMA HAS BROUGHT a SPECIAL GUEST to WARN ABOUT the DANGERS OF OBESITY...
cat
GOVT MAN

Let's go for the (nutritional) gold

By KEVIN HUFFMAN
Special to The Washington Post

The writer won The Post's "America's Next Great Pundit" contest.

Watching Shaun White drop into the halfpipe at the Vancouver Games, it's easy to forget that America is the most sedentary nation on Earth. The Daily Beast this week released the results of the Couch Potato Olympics, analyzing statistics for 24 industrialized nations in calories consumed, television watched, aversion to playing sports (yes, there are data on that) and Internet use. Congratulations, compatriots: We took home the gold!

And while Americans are most likely to celebrate White's Double McTwist 1260 with a double quarter-pounder with cheese, we're also excellent candidates for the Olympic committee's promotion: "Follow us on Twitter and you might win a cool video game!"

In this context, you'd think it would be hard to complain about Michelle Obama's childhood obesity campaign. The "Let's Move" initiative aims to improve access to healthful food and to encourage exercise. It's a good project for the first lady. She has the bully pulpit to make a difference, and it allows her to show off her guns on a regular basis — kapow!

But if there is anything that upsets right-wingers more than Michelle Obama, it's people messing with our right to live the fat life. Combine the two, and it's on.

Michelle Malkin accused the first lady of "playing the national security card" by pointing out that one-third of our military's potential recruits are too fat and out of shape to qualify. (You can imagine how appalled Malkin must have been, since Republicans are so cautious with the national security card.)

Glenn Beck weighed in, too: "This is torn from the pages of the progressive playbook. You're too stupid. You need the government to fix your life ... They're coming and they are slowly but surely taking away your freedom under the guise of helping you."

Sorry, guys, but someone needs to spell it out: Our kids don't eat well, they don't exercise and, just like their parents, they're getting fat.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have a deeply troubling digital map showing the fattening of America over the past 25 years. You can watch the country chunk up state by state as the map flashes annually from 1985 to the present. Looking at the map, I felt the same foreboding sense I had watching tech stocks 10 years ago and housing prices five years ago. This is a human bubble. It can't be sustained. And when it pops, it's going to be ugly. We're quite literally whistling past the graveyard.

The first lady's initiative isn't going to wash away past excesses, but she's shining a spotlight on a critical issue and taking some important steps. As a parent of school-age children, I can join the amen chorus when Obama calls for more nutritious school meals, comprehensible food labels, helpful tips from pediatricians and changing the 1950s-era presidential physical fitness standards. (As long as they don't give up the rope climb. How many times in life have we all been grateful for the hard-earned lessons of the rope climb?)

Still, it's worth pausing to feel just a little sad that this is where we are as a country. This is least-common-denominator stuff, and we should all be disturbed that we need a White House initiative for basic health habits, that our aspiration is to do the obvious. Put down the Doritos. Eat more fruits and vegetables. Get off the couch. America may not be able to create "green" jobs or provide health insurance to poor people, but doggone it, we can make sure we don't have to roll our kids to school.

Beck's response typifies the childlike populist pushback to any effort to tell an unfortunate truth, particularly if resolving the problem involves a modicum of discomfort. We don't want to hear about global warming, especially if we have to give up the super-sized SUV. We don't want to hear about health-care costs — we should be able to gorge on the diminishing returns of endless medical tests. And if the first lady wants us to eat more healthful food and hit the gym, she should mind her own beeswax. We pass on the costs and the girth to our kids and hope it will somehow all just work out.

We're a week into the Olympics and the United States is hanging tough at the top of the medal standings. Our best athletes are clutch, and a little global butt-kicking is good for the national soul. Even better, though, would be a sustained commitment to building a healthier country, a nation with a little less watching and a little more doing.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Mulan of Manchuria—The Harbin Ice Festival

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Vergara is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune*'s Opinion Section.*

Harbin in Heilongjiang *Dong Bei* China is not known for being "Ice City" for nothing. Getting off the train from Mudanjiang, I felt like walking into a meat freezer in Joeten. And that was the first ten seconds. After that, I started shedding tears triggered by the cold sting! And we are supposed to be into spring by China's calendar. Of course, it was midnight, and minus 26 degrees Centigrade is the other side of the moon to Saipan's plus 26 degrees Centigrade.

The walk across the train station's front parking lot the size of three football fields, with its warren of shops underground usually activity-full in the summer, totally deserted before the witching hour, the ice sculptures facing the thoroughfare made the walk through Hades frozen side worth the shiver even with two long johns underneath the canvas pants and the leather overcoat.

I hurried to the two hotels across the street: one that is for locals, which charges no more than the price of a few bowls of *jiao zi/ wonton* dumpling soups, and the other, one that caters to a more international audience with the front desk displaying the correct times of Moscow, Beijing, and New York City, and the exchange rates of money they take. This being Spring Festival con the Lunar New Year, it had China on the move as folks returned to their hometowns. There was no room in the inn.

Moving to the second hotel where I had hoped that my credit card would be accepted, I was told that only the median priced units were available. It appears that everyone and his brother from Vancouver, Toronto, New York, London and Singapore had also come home to pass out red envelopes, and join the crowd at the City's internationally renowned Ice and Snow Festival. Still, the price range was at par to Saipan's Century Hotel, so I did not wince too badly.

The ice sculptures in front of the railway station were not arresting enough for a stop in the cold but looking down from the warm confines of my 18th floor room, the magnificence of the ice sculpture and the embedded lights into the structures, gave these works of art a magnetic sheen. This use of ice as light receptacles is not recent to the area, or to the rest of Manchuria.

I woke up early morning New Years Day on the train to *Yanbian Koryo* further east of Harbin to sights of dwellings with outdoor lanterns lodged in the hollow cavities chiseled out of ice. The glow provided by the transparent and refractive material is utilitarian bright, so these are useful on wintry nights not only for the illumination they provide otherwise darkened pathways, but also the aesthetics they manifest and maintain.

Thus, what used to be the ice lantern festival in Harbin has evolved into an event created, supported, and attended by a worldwide audience. In the same latitude but much colder than Montreal in Canada, famous ice sculptors from around the world come to the city to build ice palaces and erect replicas of notable global architectures and sculptures.

From Stalin park along the Songhua Jiang, the river made famous a couple of years back when a factory upriver criminally allowed mercury to drain into the river, giving credence to the phrase, "we all live downstream and downwind," abuts the central shopping area at Zhongyang Dajie in Daoli District of Harbin. The street's architecture is Byzantine from Russia's influence when Harbin was the engineers' camp in the construction of the trans-Siberian rails, earning the city the appellation of "Moscow of the East." Commercially converted to the fashionable and trend-setting likeness of Milano's Via Monte Napoleone, the pedestrian-only road liberal display of ice sculptures in front of boutique shops would otherwise be stunning works of beauty were they the billboards of the commercial entities that sponsor them not distract their viewing.

At the Stalin park behind the workers' monument stands a replica a Great Wall section narrowed to serve like a sled-run or slalom leading into the Songhua river where dog sleds are available to take those unwilling or unable to across the frozen waters to the Sun Island Park across the river. I skipped the picture taking since the commercial ads could not be edited out. Stalin, not one of my favorite 'Tsars,' would be shaking in his boots were he to witness what has happened to the environs surrounding his namesake.

To be sure, Russian crafts and wares are still available in the shops owned and operated from across the Amur River in the land of the largest freshwater lake in the world, Lake Baikal by Irkutsk. But the fur hats and vodka flasks have since been overtaken by the offerings of Madison Ave. that the Russian Fruit and Nuts Co. bldg. now has the likeness of Coronel Sanders on its front façade!

Zhaolin Park (not to be confused with Shaolin's pagoda) was a children's haven until Disney decided to make a *Mulan* theme park past the Chinese girl warrior fame. Now, Mickey and Minnie, Donald and Daffy are greeters to the ice and snow festival offerings. I've avoided Walt's signature parks since Anaheim of the 60s, and I've graciously refused invites to other locations since, so I was not about to succumbed to this commercial cheapening of the imagination in Harbin.

Yet, as I walked the cobbled stones of this Russo-Sino sinecure a few miles off the Russian Orthodox citadel of St. Sophia, I could not help wonder at the resiliency of human physiology and the lively assertiveness of the evolving human spirit, given the extreme environmental conditions. After all, our DNA took form in the tropics, and it must have taken considerable adaptive skills to make hearth and home out of ice and snow. This same found its way across the Berring Straits to settlements in the North Slope of Alaska to Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego in America Sud.

Watching the Winter Olympics from Manchuria vicariously proffered the feel of cold Canada and to watch inexperienced and anxious China be the only team to score against the formidable U.S. ice hockey team was itself a pleasure on its own.

But the afternoon walk down Zhongyang Street witnessed also a depressing sign of the times: a well-dressed fourteen year old girl filching Renmenbi off a matron's shoulder bag, stopped in time and reprimanded in stride. Welcome to Harbin's Mulan of 2010.

Letters to the Editor

Recycling good, stealing bad!

In regards to the letter from Mr. Cruz and other proponents about keeping the status quo concerning our islands' serious problem of copper wire thefts, I believe the residents of the Commonwealth are tired of reading the repetitive news articles about new thefts of copper wire and other metal—sometimes small, sometimes big, and sometimes gigantic!

Unfortunately there are thieves among us, who do not care about the welfare of our island businesses and homes, and they steal to sell and resale. So, without the BUYERS being able to purchase these stolen metals, this nasty menace and wasteful crime against our community would not exist. These crimes are driven by the cash dangling in front of the thieves. I can take you to a place within a mile radius at Lower Base beach, which is nearby two recycling companies, where the ground is littered with mounds of stripped insulation from wire and cable stolen from honest citizens and businesses.

Several schemes have been put forward to stop this ongoing menace, including a proactive permit and onsite inspection before buying these metals. Other options, including the 45-day wait period have been tried without success. These criminals are still stealing and SELLING these ill-gotten goods.

No one doubts that recycling can be a good thing for individuals and communities. But the stealing has to stop. No, the stealing WILL stop with the proper legislation that will put a halt to this menace. But if this moratorium does not work, we will propose and enact even more drastic measures.

This Legislature assures you we will put a stop to these thefts one way or another.

Rep. Stanley McGinnis Torres
17th Legislature

Article XII resolution: Phase I

I totally agree with Mr. Alexandro Sablan of Dandan on the need for education about Article XII. I am a firm believer that education is the solution to many of the social and political challenges we face throughout the world.

I'm writing this because I think the best place to start is with the question raised by Mr. Sablan: To repeal, to retain, or to abolish altogether Article XII? First of all, repeal and abolish means the same thing, which makes it a two-prong test that the people will face in 2011—retain or abolish. To answer the critical question you only need to know that Article XII is in "direct violation" of the U.S. Constitution—meaning the people must change Article XII or be ready for another round of federalization on land ownership. Furthermore, the CNMI was duly warned in the Covenant talks so we can't say—we didn't know.

I'm sure the people of the CNMI don't want it to come to the feds stepping in as we should have learned our lessons well from immigration and wage expectations of the federal government. If the people do choose to retain Article XII in 2011 it will only take ONE U. S. citizen to complain to a federal court for the federal government to step in and create some form of equality in land ownership for every U.S. citizen in the CNMI.

I think it is obvious and clearly common sense that the people of the CNMI must abolish Article XII or else! Now we are at least on first base with this issue if we can all agree Article XII is in violation of federal law and that we must get rid of it. My only concern is who will vote on this—only indigenous people or every U.S. citizen who has voted in past elections. To deny U.S. citizens with children of indigenous ancestry to vote would indeed be a miscarriage of justice to fellow citizens and their children.

To get to second base on this issue there needs to be a plan developed as to how the people of the CNMI can abolish Article XII and still retain a certain level of "indigenous priority for future land use." I took the first question because it was a no-brainer but this second question requires that the answer be collaborative and sold to all the voters which no one person in going to do. But I can say that everyone should be thinking about how to fix this rather than trying to stop or delay the inevitable implementation of the principle of equality in the ownership of land.

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼75°	▲84° ▼75°	▲84° ▼76°

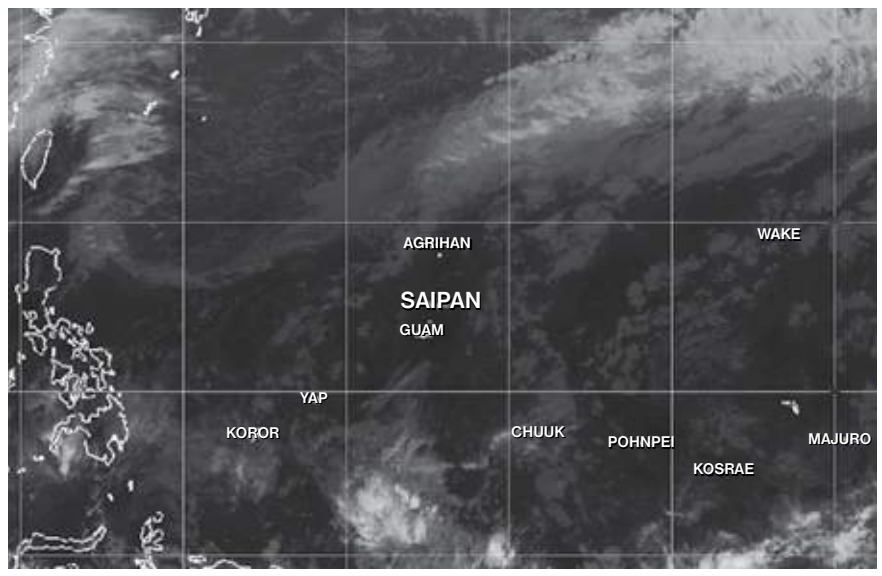
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	▲84	▼75
Palau	Showers	▲89	▼77
Yap	Cloudy	▲88	▼76
Chuuk	Cloudy	▲88	▼80
Pohnpei	Partly Sunny	▲90	▼79
Kosrae	Cloudy	▲89	▼75
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼77

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲75	▼60
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲59	▼32
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲73	▼66
Honolulu	Sunny	▲80	▼66
London	Rain	▲46	▼45
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲66	▼51
Manila	Showers	▲88	▼77
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲70	▼55
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲81	▼64
New York	Rain	▲41	▼34
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲61	▼44
Paris	Showers	▲51	▼44
Pusan	Sunny	▲63	▼43
Rome	Rain	▲59	▼48
Salem	Rain	▲48	▼39
San Francisco	Rain	▲59	▼49
Seoul	Sunny	▲55	▼36
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲60	▼43
Washington, DC	Showers	▲46	▼32

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2010
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front enters the discussion area north of Wake Island at 25N167E and extends west-southwestward to southeast of Minami Tori Shima at 22N158E then continues as a stationary front through a low pressure system centered south of Iwo To island at 22N141E to beyond 130E at 19N. Extensive cloudiness and widespread rain are found along and north of this boundary to beyond 25N between 167E and 140E. Scattered showers are seen along and up to 180 miles north of the boundary between 140E and 130E. Trade-wind convergence is triggering widely scattered showers west of Koror between 3N and 11N from 130E to 134E and over Yap within 115 miles of a line from 13N137E to 5N141E farther south and east. Divergent upper-level winds are triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms south of a line from 4N141E to 3N147E and over Tarawa and Butaritari atolls between the equator and 2N from 169E to 176E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

3:48 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
7:47 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
1:09 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
9:18 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:38 AM	6:23 PM
Wednesday	6:37 AM	6:23 PM
Thursday	6:37 AM	6:24 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	6:24 PM
Saturday	6:36 AM	6:24 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:43 PM	1:14 AM
Wednesday	1:44 PM	2:14 AM
Thursday	2:48 PM	3:12 AM
Friday	3:53 PM	4:08 AM
Saturday	4:57 PM	5:00 AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 28, 2010

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT
NW638	8:00am	10:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily
NW289	5:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am	
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

CA8282	3:15am	7:00am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 4, 5, 7 via PUS
C09603/893	3:15pm	9:10pm	3, 5 via GUM-PALAU
OZ606/715	3:20pm	11:30pm	7 via ICN
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:35am+1	Daily via NRT effective Jan 25
NW277	8:30pm	1:00am+1	3, 6
NW639	9:00pm	1:35am+1	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW290	10:00am	2:35pm	Daily
NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	9:00pm	1:35am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm	
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

CA8281	6:40pm	1:55am+1	4, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4, 6 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C0892/9596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	3,5 via PALAU-GUM
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2 ,4 ,6, 7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2, 4 ,6 ,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CA: China Airlines; CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

Can low-paying garment industry save Haiti?

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—Jordanie Pinquie Rebeca leans forward and guides a piece of suit-jacket wool and its silky lining into a sewing machine, where—bat! bat! bat!—they're bound together to be hemmed.

If she does this for eight hours, she will earn $3.09. Her boss will ship the pinstriped suit she helped make to the United States, tariff-free. There a shopper will buy it from JoS. A. Bank Clothiers for $550.

In the quest to rebuild Haiti, the international community and business leaders are dusting off a pre-quake plan to expand its low-wage garment assembly industry as a linchpin of recovery. President Barack Obama's administration is on board, encouraging U.S. retailers to obtain from Haiti at least 1 percent of the clothes they sell.

But will that save a reeling country whose economy must be built from scratch?

Few Haitians have steady incomes, and unemployment is unmeasurable; before the quake it was estimated at between 60 and 80 percent. In cities, most scrape by selling in the streets, doing odd jobs or relying on remittances from abroad that make up a quarter of Haiti's $7 billion gross domestic product.

Garments are central to the economic growth plan commissioned by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon last year, a 19-page report written by Oxford University economics professor Paul Collier and promoted by former President Bill Clinton as special envoy to the impoverished nation.

They say the sector could quickly produce hundreds of thousands of jobs thanks chiefly to two things: an existing preferential trade deal with the nearby United States, and cheap Haitian labor.

The deal is the Haiti Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act, or "HOPE II." Passed by the U.S. Congress in 2008, it lets Haiti export textiles duty-free to the U.S. for a decade. Last year, $513 million worth of Haitian-made apparel, the bulk of exports, was shipped with labels including Hanes and New Balance. Factory profit margins average about 22 percent, according to Washington-based Nathan Associates Inc.

The cheap labor is Jordanie Pinquie Rebeca, and others like her.

During a recent shift at the South Korean-owned factory where she works six days a week, employees softly sang a Creole hymn beneath the hot fluorescent lights: "Lord, take my hand. Bring me through."

AP

In this photo taken Feb. 19, 2010, Women work at the DKDR Haiti garment assembly factory in Port-au-Prince.

Obama to propose limits on health insurance rates

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama will propose giving federal authorities the power to limit rate hikes by health insurance companies—part of a new health care overhaul plan he will unveil Monday in a last-ditch bid to salvage his signature issue.

The proposal would give the federal Health and Human Services Department—in conjunction with state authorities—the power to deny egregious premium increases, roll them back, or demand rebates for consumers, said a White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity because details have not yet been officially released.

Recent premium hikes of as much as 39 percent sought by Anthem Blue Cross in California have given Obama a new argument for his sweeping health care remake, stalled in Congress since Democrats lost their 60th Senate seat in a special election last month in Massachusetts.

The proposal for tighter oversight of insurers, modeled on legislation proposed by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., will be part of a sweeping overhaul plan which the White House plans to post on its Web site at 10 a.m. Monday, ahead of a health care summit with congressional leaders of both parties on Thursday.

The broader plan, likely to be opposed by the GOP, is expected to require most Americans to carry health insurance coverage, with federal subsidies to help many afford the premiums. Hewing close to a stalled Senate bill, it would bar insurance companies from denying coverage to people with medical problems or charging them more. The expected price tag is around $1 trillion over 10 years.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Lufthansa: Pilots launch 4-day strike

BERLIN (AP)—More than 4,000 pilots for Germany's Lufthansa AG airline launched a four-day strike early Monday that is expected to cause headaches for travelers around the world. Lufthansa spokeswoman Stefanie Stotz confirmed Monday the strike, organized by the Cockpit pilots union, began at midnight (2300GMT). It was to last until Thursday. The airline enacted a special, limited flight plan and said it regretted "the inconveniences caused" to passengers. Lufthansa was forced to cancel hundreds of flights.

Asian markets recover from drop following Fed move

HONG KONG (AP)—Asian stock markets rose sharply Monday, recovering from a tumble last week when the U.S. central bank decided to pull back one of its emergency supports for the financial system. The region's major indexes were up as much as 3 percent as investors took a second look at the Federal Reserve's decision and decided it boded well for the U.S. economy. Asian investors were initially unnerved by the unexpected move Thursday to raise rates on emergency bank lending, fearing it could derail recovery in the world's largest economy.

Union vows to toughen strike at France's Total

LA DEFENSE, France (AP)—A French labor union walked out of talks with oil giant Total on Sunday, pledging to toughen a strike that has shut down the company's refineries in France for three days. Charles Foulard, the CGT's coordinator for Total, left talks at the company's headquarters west of Paris saying "negotiations have broken down." The CGT union, which represents a majority of workers in the conflict, wants to enlist workers at French refineries not run by Total SA in the protest, he said. The strike has shut down Total's six French refineries—half the total in France—since Friday. The movement, sparked by workers' concerns about the future of a refinery in Dunkirk, in northern France, has raised fears in France about possible gasoline shortages.

Decaying apartments symptom of housing crisis

NEW YORK (AP)—There was no heat or hot water, so for weeks Mary Fountain would fill a bowl and put it in the microwave, then strip off her extra layers to sponge herself clean.

Upstairs, her longtime neighbor, 70-year-old Gearaldine Davis, peers skeptically out at her balcony, hesitant to step onto the cracked concrete. The last time the city inspector came by, he told her he was afraid to walk out there.

This Bronx apartment building, where city housing violations have increased from 82 to nearly 600 in 16 months, is among thousands of rental properties from Los Angeles to Harlem showing a creeping decay as housing values collapse and funds for repairs dry up.

As landlords find themselves owing more than their properties are worth, some have simply walked away, leaving garbage to pile up. Others have disappeared into bankruptcy, with unpaid utility bills. Some have tried to reduce their losses by neglecting basic maintenance.

"There are 100,000 apartments teetering on the edge" in New York City alone, said Harold Shultz, senior fellow at the Citizens Housing and Planning Council. "And depending upon the way various winds blow, they could fall over."

Across the country, multifamily mortgages covering 340,000 apartment units and worth an estimated $28.8 billion were delinquent or in foreclosure at the end of 2009—more than 18 times the sum from two years earlier—according to Real Capital Analytics.

Earlier this month, a Congressional report warned that the deterioration of these properties could drag down the value of the surrounding neighborhoods. In New York, where these troubled investments centered on gentrifying areas of the Bronx and Harlem, advocates worry the problems could deliver lasting blows to neighborhoods that have long struggled.

Of New York City's 1 million rent-stabilized apartments, more than one-tenth are facing severe financial distress, says Rafael Cestero, commissioner of the city Department of Housing Preservation and Development. Of those, more than one-quarter have deteriorated visibly since the beginning of the downturn.

AP

In this Feb. 11, 2010 photo, Mary Fountain goes through a file full of papers that document the numerous violations at her apartment in New York.

Documents: Toyota boasted saving $100M on recall

WASHINGTON (AP)—Toyota officials claimed they saved the company $100 million by successfully negotiating with the government on a limited recall of floor mats in some Toyota and Lexus vehicles, according to new documents shared with congressional investigators.

Toyota, in an internal presentation in July 2009 at its Washington office, said it saved $100 million or more by negotiating an "equipment recall" of floor mats involving 55,000 Toyota Camry and Lexus ES350 vehicles in September 2007.

The savings are listed under the title, "Wins for Toyota—Safety Group." The document cites millions of dollars in other savings by delaying safety regulations, avoiding defect investigations and slowing down other industry requirements.

The documents were turned over to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and obtained by The Associated Press on Sunday. The presentation was first reported by The Detroit News.

A Toyota spokeswoman did not immediately comment.

The documents are expected to be raised in Congress, which is holding two hearings on Toyota's massive recalls this week. The Japanese automaker has called back 8.5 million vehicles in recent months to deal with safety problems involving gas pedals, floor mats and brakes.

The world's largest automaker has been criticized for responding too slowly to complaints of sudden acceleration in its vehicles, threatening to undermine its reputation for quality and safety.

Nation

Authorities charge 2 men in Texas church fire

TYLER, Texas (AP)—Two men who once attended church together were charged Sunday with intentionally burning down a church in east Texas and are suspected in a string of similar blazes, authorities said.

Jason Robert Bourque, 19, and 21-year-old Daniel George McAllister face one count of felony arson for a church fire in rural Smith County near Tyler, about 90 miles east of Dallas, said Tom Crowley, spokesman for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Bond is set at $10 million apiece. They could face life in prison if convicted.

"Because they are charged with one doesn't mean they're not going to be charged with some of the others," Crowley said.

Bourque

Crowley and Smith County jail officials said they had no information on attorneys for either men.

Bourque, of nearby Lindale, was arrested early Sunday in Van Zandt County, site of four of 10 church fires in east Texas this year that authorities believe were intentionally set, Crowley said.

McAllister was taken into custody in San Antonio, where Crowley said he had recently moved.

He said Bourque and McAllister used to attend First Baptist Church in McAllister's hometown of Ben Wheeler.

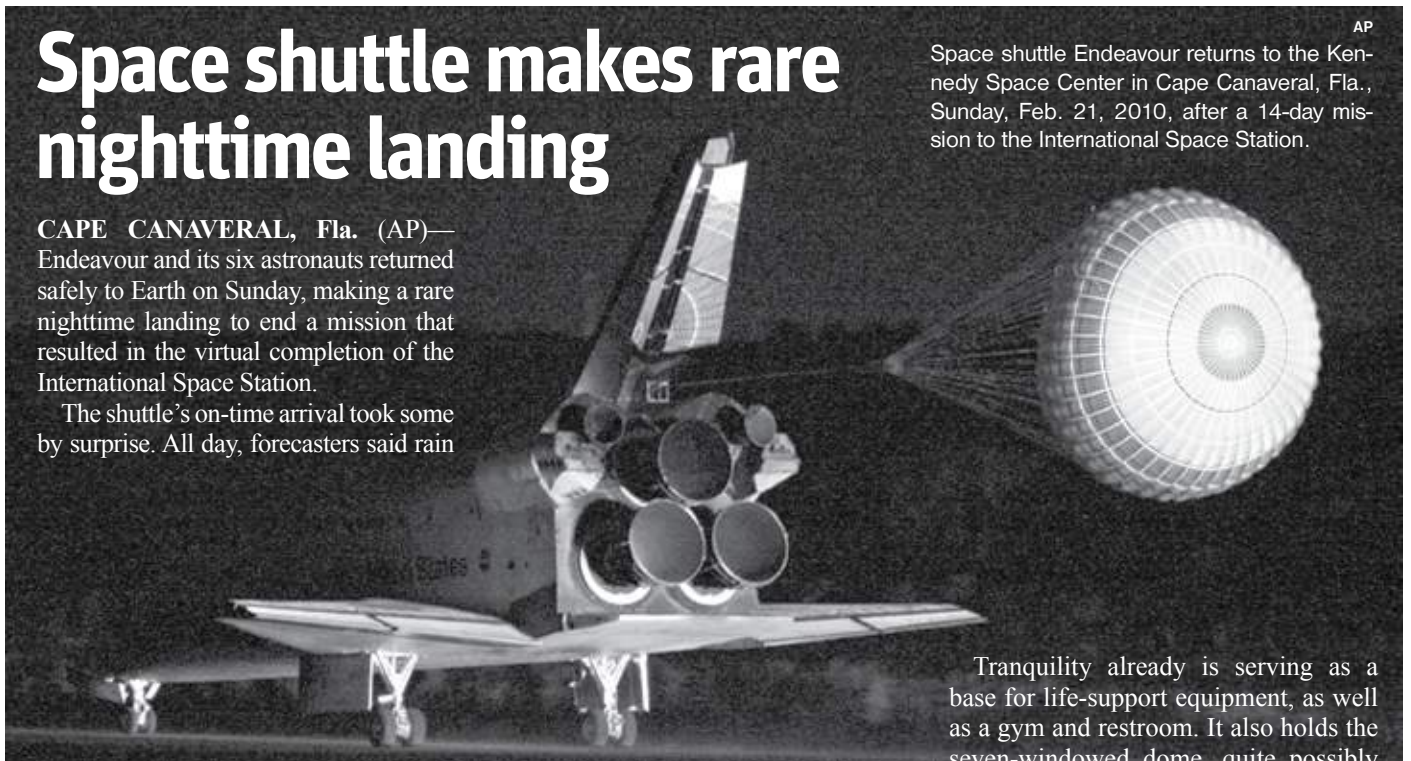
The arrests were triggered by a telephone tip, although the suspects had been on the radar for several weeks, Crowley said.

One of the men was linked to the fire with DNA evidence, Crowley said. He said he had no other details on the DNA.

Officials declined to discuss a motive at a news conference Sunday. No injuries have been reported in the fires.

The outbreak started with a blaze at a church in Athens, and Crowley said another New Year's Day fire not far away has been added to the list of 10 suspected arsons in east Texas. A fire in the central Texas town of Temple, brings to 11 the statewide total of fires authorities believe are attributable to arson.

Space shuttle makes rare nighttime landing



AP

Space shuttle Endeavour returns to the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010, after a 14-day mission to the International Space Station.

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—Endeavour and its six astronauts returned safely to Earth on Sunday, making a rare nighttime landing to end a mission that resulted in the virtual completion of the International Space Station.

The shuttle's on-time arrival took some by surprise. All day, forecasters said rain and clouds probably would scuttle any touchdown attempts. But the rain stayed away and the sky cleared just in time.

"It's great to be home. It was a great adventure," commander George Zamka said after the shuttle rolled to a stop on the 3-mile-long runway, awash in xenon lights.

During their mission—which spanned two weeks and 5.7 million miles—the astronauts delivered and installed a new space station room, Tranquility, and a big bay window with sweeping views of the Earth.

Upon touchdown, Mission Control immediately relayed congratulations to Zamka and his crew for connecting Tranquility and opening up those new "windows to the world."

"Welcome home," Mission Control radioed.

This was the 23rd space shuttle landing in darkness, out of 130 flights. The last time was in 2008, by Endeavour as well.

Tranquility already is serving as a base for life-support equipment, as well as a gym and restroom. It also holds the seven-windowed dome, quite possibly the most anticipated addition ever made to a spacecraft.

The 10 men and one woman on the shuttle-station complex couldn't get enough of the views out those windows, once the shutters were raised last week.

In fact, at least one of the space station residents, Japanese astronaut Soichi Noguchi, watched Endeavour's atmospheric re-entry from the new dome. "The view was definitely out-of-the-world," he wrote in a Twitter update.

World's refugee orphans seeking homes in the US

HOLLISTON, Mass. (AP)—Hiding from merciless militiamen and trekking through unforgiving mountainous terrain, Madhel Majok escaped the mass slayings and genocide of the Sudan that killed his parents. The 9-year-old orphan fled to neighboring Kenya, where he then survived vigilante shellings on his crowded refugee camp.

Majok remained in limbo for eight years while waiting for any country to grant him refuge.

Now 17, Majok has found safety in a small New England enclave 30 miles west of Boston. He's a star soccer player at Holliston High School, listens to Tupac and Biggie at his leisure and lives comfortably in a foster home, thanks to a federal program that matches refugee minors with American families.

"I like it. It's peaceful... quiet," said Majok, who wears American urban-style clothes and stays in a home with four other refugee Asian and African children. "Took me a long time to get here."

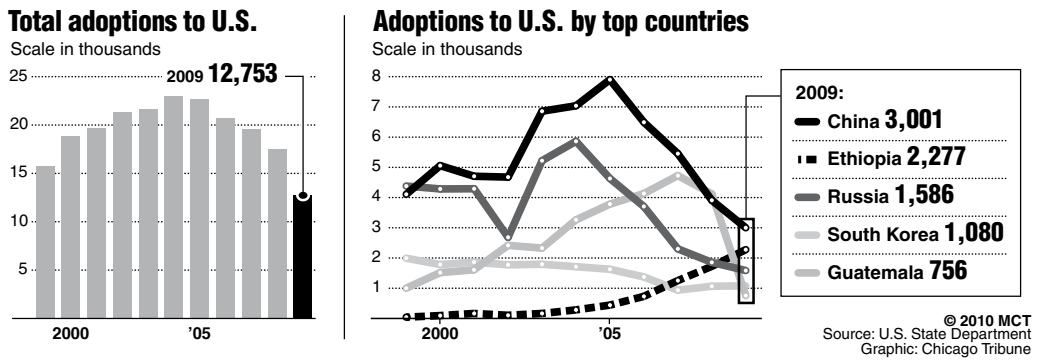
The U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, which has 700 refugee children in foster care, has asked states to prepare to foster more international refugee children like Majok, whose parents either have disappeared or been killed by war or natural disaster. The need is heightened by continuing armed conflicts in Africa and recent events such as the earthquake in Haiti.

The request means that Massachusetts and other states must ask more households to open up their homes for foster care or ask existing foster families to take in another refugee child at a time of economic downturn.

"Between all the wars going on and all the (human) trafficking laws that have changed, more children are needing safe homes," said Sherrill Hilliard, the program manager for Refugee Immigration & Assistance Program in Washington. "And we're doing our best to find them."

International adoptions decline

Countries with new eligibility restrictions, a changing global economy and a decrease in available children have decreased international adoptions.



Researchers: Most 'test tube' kids are healthy

SAN DIEGO (AP)—More than 30 years after the world greeted its first "test-tube" baby with a mixture of awe, elation and concern, researchers say they are finding only a few medical differences between these children and kids conceived in the traditional way.

More than 3 million children have been born worldwide as a result of what is called assisted reproductive technology, and injecting sperm into the egg outside the human body now accounts for about 4 percent of live births, researchers reported Sunday at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The majority of assisted reproduction children are healthy and normal, according to researchers who have studied them. Some of these children do face an increased risk of birth defects, such as neural tube defects, and of low birth weight, which is associated with obesity, hypertension and Type 2 diabetes later in life, the researchers said.

"Overall, these children do well," said Andre Van Steirteghem of the Brussels Free University Center for Reproductive Medicine in Belgium. "It is a reassuring message, but we must continue to follow up."

Carmen Sapienza, a geneticist at Temple University School of Medicine in Philadelphia, noted that few of these test tube children are older than 30, so it's not known if they will be obese or have hypertension or other health problems at age 50 or older.

ACROSS THE NATION

Clinton: Lack of sleep added to health problem

NEW YORK (AP)—Former President Bill Clinton said Wednesday that he will manage his stress better after undergoing a procedure to unclog a blocked artery, but emphasized that he has no intention of slowing down. It would be a mistake to stop working, Clinton said at an event focusing on childhood obesity. "I've been given this gift of life by my surgery five years ago, the medicine I take, the lifestyle changes I've made," he said. "I don't want to throw it away by being a vegetable. I want to do things with it every day." Clinton said he would make changes like getting more sleep and being more disciplined about exercising every day.

Wyo. man dead, 3 officers hurt in home explosion

CASPER, Wyo. (AP)—An investigation is under way into an explosion that leveled a Wyoming home, leaving an apparently suicidal man dead and three police officers injured. Police received a call Saturday morning about a suicidal person in a house who had disconnected the gas lines. Officers evacuated the neighborhood and set up roadblocks shortly before the blast occurred, just after noon. Fire crews found 44-year-old Michael Lesher in the basement of the collapsed home still breathing at about 6 p.m. He was transported to Wyoming Medical Center, where he died a few hours later.

Police Lt. Mark Trimble says three officers were nearing the front porch when the house exploded. They were treated at the hospital for abrasions and bruises and released.

The Casper Fire Department is investigating.

Train kills 3 teen girls crossing Florida bridge

MELBOURNE, Fla. (AP)—Three teenage girls were joking around and taking pictures on a narrow bridge when they were hit by a train, killing them as a friend watched helplessly, police and a witness said Sunday. The girls and the fourth teenager, a boy, had been hanging out in Melbourne's downtown area—known for its shops and nightclubs—when they decided to cross the trestle around 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Lt. Curtis Barger said. Their parents had dropped them off at a mall, and then they took a bus downtown where they were "just goofing off," he said. The boy yelled for the girls to run when he saw the train approach, then told them to jump, Barger said. Crane Creek, about 20 feet below the bridge, is slow-moving and about 10 feet deep. The girls did not have enough time.

Asia

Outgunned Taliban mounting tough fight in Marjah

MARJAH, Afghanistan (AP)—Outnumbered and outgunned, Taliban fighters are mounting a tougher fight than expected in Marjah, Afghan officials said Sunday, as U.S.-led forces converged on a pocket of militants in a western section of the town.

Despite ongoing fighting, the newly appointed civilian chief for Marjah said he plans to fly into the town Monday for the first time since the attack to begin restoring Afghan government control and winning over the population after years of Taliban rule.

With fighter jets, drones and attack helicopters roaring overhead, Marine and Afghan companies advanced Sunday on a 2-square-mile (5.2-sq. kilometer) area where more than 40 insurgents were believed holed up.

"They are squeezed," said Lt. Col. Brian Christmas, commander of 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment. "It looks like they want to stay and fight but they can always drop their weapons and slip away. That's the nature of this war."

U.S. officials signaled their intention to attack Marjah, a major Taliban supply and opium-smuggling center, months ago, apparently in hopes the insurgents would flee and allow the U.S.-led force to take over quickly and restore an Afghan government presence.

Instead, the insurgents rigged Marjah with bombs and booby traps to slow the allied attack, which began Feb. 13. Teams of Taliban gunmen stayed in the town, delivering sometimes intense volleys of gunfire on Marine and Afghan units slogging through the rutted streets and poppy fields.

Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said the U.S. and its allies had expected the Taliban to leave behind thousands of hidden explosives, which they did. But they were surprised to find that so many militants stayed to fight.

"We predicted it would take many days. But our prediction was that the insurgency would not resist that way," Azimi told The Associated Press in Kabul.

In a statement Sunday, NATO acknowledged that insurgents were putting up a "determined resistance" in various parts of Marjah, although the overall offensive is "on track."

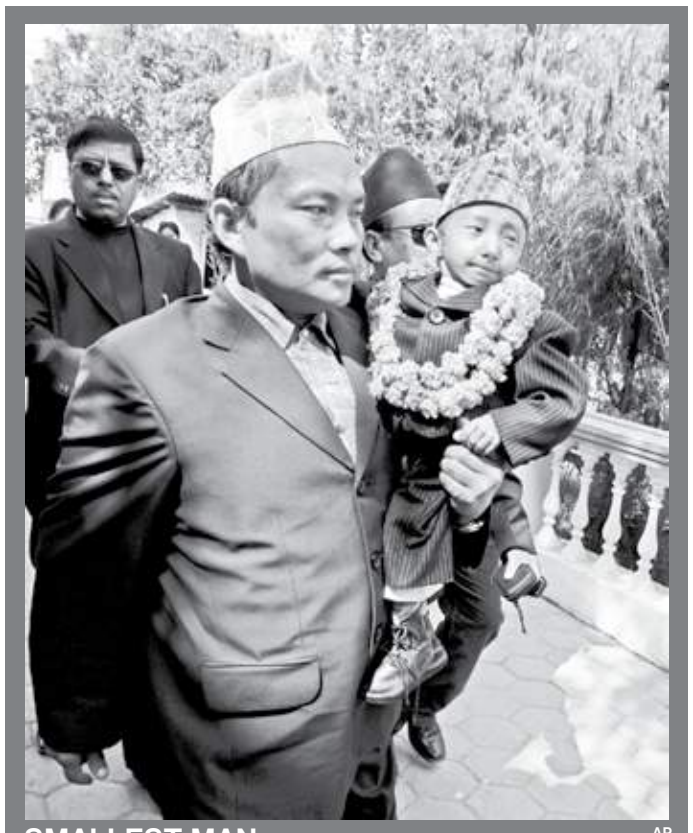
Marine spokesman Lt. Josh Diddams said Sunday that Marines and Afghan troops were continuing to run into "pockets of stiff resistance" though they were making progress. Diddams said no area is completely calm yet although three markets in town—which covers about 80 square miles—are at least partially open.

"Everywhere we've got Marines, we're running into insurgents," Diddams said. In many cases, the militants are fighting out of bunkers fortified with sandbags and other materials.

Before the assault, U.S. officers said they believed 400 to 1,000 insurgents were in Marjah, 360 miles (610 kilometers) southwest of Kabul. About 7,500 U.S. and Afghan troops attacked the town, while thousands more NATO soldiers moved into other Taliban strongholds in surrounding Helmand province.

It was the largest joint NATO-Afghan operation since the Taliban regime was ousted from power in 2001.

NATO's civilian chief in Afghanistan, Mark Sedwill, said the military operation was moving slowly "because of essentially the ruthlessness of the opponent we face and the rules that we've set for ourselves" to protect civilians.



AP

SMALLEST MAN

Khagendra Thapa Magar, 18, who stands at 22 inches (56 centimeters) tall, is carried by his father Rup Bahadur Thapa Magar, as he arrives for a meeting with media before leaving for Europe in Katmandu, Nepal, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010. Magar's family initially filed a claim for the title of the world's shortest man when he was just 14 years old but it was rejected since he was not an adult and there was a chance he might grow, said Min Bahadur Ranamagar, of the Khagendra Thapa Magar Foundation. Magar turned 18 in October 2009.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Kabul lodge honors 'Flashy,' scoundrel of fiction

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—When winter winds blow and guests huddle by the antique fireplace, talk turns to a 19th century British officer—a charming scoundrel, serial seducer and highly decorated coward who warned that any Western powers trying to subdue Afghanistan were just asking for a bloody nose. Or so the story goes. Gandamack Lodge is an eccentric piece of work, a resurrection of Victorian England in a walled compound bristling with security guards in an Afghan capital whose streets can quickly turn deadly. And the man who inspired such an improbable guesthouse and pub.

Indonesian clerics mull motorcycle helmet fatwa

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesia's leading clerics are considering a religious edict against riding a motorbike without a crash helmet to promote safety on the chaotic and deadly roads of the world's most populous Muslim country. Such a fatwa would not carry a penalty for those who ignore it, but advocates said Sunday making road safety a moral issue could be more effective than the law. Helmets have been compulsory in Indonesia since 1988, but a 2005 government study found that up to 30 percent of riders in cities still did not wear one. Even fewer riders wear them in rural areas.

Holbrooke seeks Central Asia help for Afghanistan

ALMATY, Kazakhstan (AP)—U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke visited Kazakhstan on Sunday to drum up regional assistance in stabilizing Afghanistan, the last stop on his tour of former Soviet states in Central Asia. The recent surge in the U.S. military contingent in Afghanistan has been accompanied by a U.S. effort to enlist help from neighboring nations in rebuilding the war-ravaged country and to provide reassurances that the war won't spill over the border. "We are talking to all the countries that have a concern in the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and that is why we are here today," Holbrooke said in Kazakh capital of Astana.

For a new India, a new calling: the wedding sleuth

NEW DELHI (AP)—Ajit Singh knows about the lies people tell.

He has followed them through the littered, mildewed mazes of New Delhi's middle class neighborhoods. He has photographed them as they leave their lovers' apartments. He hears them exaggerate their salaries and hide their illnesses.

A thin man in an ill-fitting suit, Singh works out of a crowded office around the corner from a muffler shop. An incense stick burns behind his desk. A sign in slightly fractured English warns the staff: "Walls Has Ears And Eyes Too. BE ALERT."

Singh has spent years honing his skills: disguise, surveillance, misdirection. With just a few minutes' notice, he can deploy teams nearly anywhere across the country.

Because in modern India, where centuries of arranged marriages are being replaced by unions based on love, emotion and anonymous Internet introductions, where would a wedding be without a private detective?

"Today, there's a need to check if people are telling the truth. And that is where we get involved," said Singh. "Does that boy really have an education? Is he really earning that big salary? Is that boy or girl running around?"

A groom-to-be may seem like a nice young man. He might come from a good family. But nearly two decades running his own agency, Hatfield Detectives, has taught Singh how little that can mean. So he spells out a warning, lingering over each word: "You don't know what that boy is doing with his time."

The detectives, though, are ready to find out.

"Before, we were only a luxury for someone who had a hell of a lot of money," said Baldev Puri, the tough-talking 45-year-old founder of AMX, a large New Delhi-based agency where one-third of the business is premarital investigations. "Now, every family wants to know the maximum."

Thaksin ruling could further inflame Thai unrest

BANGKOK (AP)—A court ruling on whether Thailand's deposed leader Thaksin Shinawatra should lose his fortune for alleged corruption could become the latest flash point in four years of sometimes-violent political unrest that has exposed deep divisions in Thai society.

The government of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva is hoping Friday's decision will lead to a return of stability, but it has hedged its bets, imposing a security crackdown around the country and offering safe houses for the court's judges, claiming the pro-Thaksin "Red Shirt" movement may be planning violence.

Political passions have led to years of off-and-on street protests, pitting those who view Thaksin as a corrupt demagogue who bought his way to power against those who benefited from his populist policies and see the military coup that ousted him in September 2006 as a grave injustice orchestrated by a ruling elite scared of change.

The refusal by Thaksin's opponents to accept the results of post-coup elections that saw his allies return to power led to their occupation of the seat of government for several months and seizure of the capital's two airports for a week in 2008. A court ruling that led to the fall of the pro-Thaksin government and Abhisit taking power through parliamentary maneuverings fueled the ire of the Red Shirts, who last year rioted and disrupted a conference of Asian heads of government.

Now, says government spokesman Panitan Wattanayagorn, "People expect the system to resume functioning normally, the parliamentary system and the economic system. Although we continue to have political differences, the wishes of the people are clear."

Actual evidence of a return to normalcy is slim. Red Shirt leaders boast of plans for a "million-man march" sometime after the verdict.

AP

School officials carry the statue of U.S. President Barack Obama in Jakarta late Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Obama statue returns to public view in Jakarta

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—A statue of Barack Obama as a boy was placed late Sunday night at the Jakarta elementary school the U.S. president once attended, after its display in a public park prompted backlash in the Indonesia capital.

The re-placement of the bronze statue a week after it disappeared from public view was a low-key event officiated by the school's principal and three local education officials. Scores of proud students had been among the crowd of 500 watching when Jakarta's mayor unveiled the statue in the nearby park in December.

The likeness based on a childhood photograph shows a 10-year-old Obama smiling at a butterfly perched on his outstretched thumb.

The late night schedule was aimed at finishing before almost 500 students arrive for school Monday, not an attempt to keep a low profile, said the main fundraiser for the statue, Ron Mullers. The statue's removal from the park also was done on a Sunday night.

Many Indonesias are proud of Obama's connections to Indonesia, but detractors of the statue's park display argued an Indonesia hero should be honored instead. A Facebook campaign attracted more than 50,000 supporters of the statue's removal, and court action was initiated to force it.

World

Portugal floods kill 42, some people feared buried

FUNCHAL, Madeira Islands (AP)—Rescue workers in Madeira dug through heaps of mud, boulders and debris Sunday, searching for victims buried by floods and mudslides that have killed at least 42 people on the popular Portuguese island.

Residents looking for missing loved ones were directed by local authorities to the resort's international airport, where a makeshift morgue has been set up.

Social services spokesman Francisco Jardim Ramos said not all the bodies had been identified. The center is equipped with psychiatric, psychological and social counseling services, he said.

More than 120 other people were injured and an unknown number were missing, possibly swept away or smothered, authorities said, adding the death could still rise. Of 248 people who were forced to flee their homes for temporary shelters, 85 have been allowed to return home, Ramos said.

Late Sunday, a spokeswoman for the British Foreign office confirmed that a British national had died, but declined to give further details. The spokeswoman spoke on condition of anonymity in line with department policy.

The Foreign Office also said a small number of Britons had been hospitalized on Madeira. The island is popular with British tourists, who for centuries have regarded wines made in Madeira as a luxury product.

The worst storm to hit Madeira since 1993 lashed the south of the Atlantic Ocean island, including the capital, Funchal, Saturday, turning some streets into torrents of mud, water and rolling debris.

"We heard a very loud noise, like rolling thunder, the ground shook and then we realized it was water coming down," said Simon Burgbage, of Britain.

Madeira is the main island, with a population of around 250,000, of a Portuguese archipelago of the same name in the Atlantic Ocean just over 480km (300 miles) off the west coast of Africa.

The flash floods were so powerful they carved paths down mountains and ripped through the city, churning under some bridges and tearing others down. Residents caught in the torrent clung to railings to avoid being swept away. Cars were tossed about by the force of the water; the battered shells of overturned vehicles littered the streets.

"It was horrible, there were cars on rooftops, there were vans and trucks that had fallen and been totally crushed," said German tourist Andreas Hoisser.

The raging water swept a fire truck downstream, slamming it into a tree.

AP

Cars are seen piled up among houses on a hillside outside Funchal, the Madeira Island's capital, Saturday, Feb. 20 2010.

Chavez: Saboteurs targeting Venezuela's power grid

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—President Hugo Chavez accused his adversaries on Sunday of sabotaging Venezuela's electricity grid as part of a broader plan aimed at bringing about the system's collapse—and his downfall.

Chavez said authorities must be "on the alert" and apprehend anyone who cuts electricity cables connected to the grid. Such sabotage has caused power failures in some regions and exacerbated the effects of severe energy shortages, he said.

"Be on the lookout! Patrols must be carried out to capture the saboteurs because those responsible must be caught and put in prison," Chavez said during his weekly television and radio program, "Hello President."

Referring to his government's adversaries, he said: "They think that's how they're going to topple Chavez, and that's what they're seeking, but if there's an electricity collapse, it won't be Chavez who is going to fall. Prepare yourselves, bourgeois folks, because it will be you who will fall."

The accusations were vague and Chavez provided no evidence supporting them.

AP

In this photo released by Miraflores press office, Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez speaks during his TV show "Hello President" in Merida, western Venezuela, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Energy Minister Ali Rodriguez echoed the allegations.

"I have no doubt that many of the failures that are occurring are the product of sabotage. We are investigating," Rodriguez said.

Opposition leaders scoffed at the president's claim, saying Chavez is trying to shed the blame for power shortages that critics say his government caused by failing to invest enough in electricity production over the last decade.

"The president is a great manipulator and he uses lies to fool the people," Juan Jose Molina, an opposition politician, said in a telephone interview.

He noted more than a dozen projects to build thermoelectric plants have been delayed.

"It's Chavez's own incompetence that's going to bring him down," Molina said. "We want to get him out (of office) with votes."

Chavez declared an energy emergency earlier this month, announcing that his socialist government will punish businesses and industries that use what the government considers excessive amounts of electricity. He promised discounts to those that cut consumption.

UK offers help to Israelis linked to Dubai killing

JERUSALEM (AP)—The British Embassy in Israel said Sunday it is giving new passports to six British nationals whose identities were stolen by the suspects in the slaying of a top Hamas operative in Dubai—a first step toward clearing their names and returning their lives to normal.

The six Britons—and a seventh man whose name appeared on a German passport used by the alleged hit squad—have had their lives thrown into turmoil by the assassination of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh last month. The seven, all dual citizens, have expressed anger and confusion and say they were victims of identity theft.

Officials in the United Arab Emirates said Sunday that at least two more fake Irish passports have been linked to the alleged assassins, and urged European investigators to launch full-scale probes into passport fraud.

The methodical stalking and killing of al-Mabhouh in a luxury hotel room—widely blamed on Israel's Mossad spy agency—has sparked an investigation that has spread across several continents, with investigators probing possible credit card links to U.S.-based banks, and European officials grilling Israeli envoys over fraudulent passports.

Al-Mabhouh body was found in his room at a luxury hotel in Dubai on Jan. 20, and suspicion almost immediately fell on Israel's Mossad spy agency.

The discovery that the identities used by seven of the suspected killers belonged to Israeli citizens has further fueled suspicions that the secretive Mossad agency carried out the hit. Dubai authorities, who have identified a total of 18 suspects, have said they are virtually certain the Mossad was involved.

WORLD BRIEFS

Bush, Blair attend Nigeria ceremony

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP)—Former world leaders George W. Bush and Tony Blair joined Nigeria's elite at a ceremony honoring the political and business establishment Sunday, but one honoree's absence highlighted the endemic corruption and other problems plaguing the oil-rich nation. Hosted by a Nigerian newspaper mogul Nduka Obaigbena, the ceremony included an award for former anti-corruption investigator Nuhu Ribadu, who investigated top ruling-party politicians. But family members had to accept the award for Ribadu who left Nigeria for the United States after being fired from his job and the target of a drive-by shooting. Ribadu once estimated corruption cost Nigeria—a nation where most people live on less than $2 a day—over $380 billion since independence. Yet little has been done to stem that flow.

Brazil defends its search efforts in shipwreck

SAO PAULO (AP)—The Brazilian navy on Sunday defended its response to a shipwreck that left dozens of teenage students from around the world adrift on the ocean for two nights. The navy deployed a search aircraft about 19 hours after it received a distress signal from the SV Concordia on Wednesday, which officials say is in line with standard procedure. All 48 students and 16 crew members were safely rescued Friday, nearly 40 hours after the sailing ship capsized in the Atlantic several hundred miles (kilometers) off the Brazilian coast. The students, who were taking part in the Canadian-based Class Afloat program, were expected to begin flying home later Sunday as soon as their emergency documents and plane tickets were arranged.

West Bank shrines on Israeli heritage list

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel is adding two key West Bank holy shrines to its list of national heritage sites, the prime minister said Sunday, staking a claim that angered Palestinians, who want Israel out of the West Bank. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, addressing a session of his Cabinet at a heritage site in the Israeli Galilee, said the two sites were late additions to the list, reflecting pressure from settlers and other nationalists to widen the heritage category to include Old Testament sites in the West Bank. One of the sites, in the city of Hebron, has been a flashpoint for decades. Jews call it the Cave of the Patriarchs, where the Bible says the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were buried along with three of their wives.

Israel unveils new drone fleet that can reach Iran

TEL NOF AIR FORCE BASE, Israel (AP)—Israel's air force on Sunday introduced a fleet of huge pilotless planes that can remain in the air for a full day and could fly as far as the Persian Gulf, putting rival Iran within its range.

The Heron TP drones have a wingspan of 86 feet (26 meters), making them the size of Boeing 737 passenger jets and the largest unmanned aircraft in Israel's military. The planes can fly at least 20 consecutive hours and are primarily used for surveillance and carrying diverse payloads.

At the fleet's inauguration ceremony at a sprawling air base in central Israel, the drone dwarfed an F-15 fighter jet parked beside it. The unmanned plane resembles its predecessor, the Heron, but can fly higher, reaching an altitude of more than 40,000 feet (12,000 meters), and remain in the air longer.

"With the inauguration of the Heron TP, we are realizing the air force's dream," said Brig. Gen. Amikam Norkin, commander of the base that will operate the drones. "The Heron TP is a technological and operational breakthrough."

Overdrive

2010 INFINITI EX35 JOURNEY

Safety in the snow, at a premium price

By WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

Foul winter weather is a good life coach, as evidenced by lessons learned from the East Coast snowstorms of February 2010. For example, consider age and residence:

If you are north of 55 years, it makes perfect sense to live in a condominium development where employees remove snow from driveways and sidewalks. With their plows and blowers, condo workers are more effective at snow removal than 50-somethings wielding snow shovels at detached, privately owned homes.

That knowledge comes from empirical observation. Ria Manglapus, my Washington Post assistant for vehicle evaluations, didn't shovel anything in the early February storms that covered the mid-Atlantic and Northeast with up to three feet of snow. Snow shoveling and dumping was done quickly and efficiently by her development's service department.

Thus, we parked this week's test car, the 2010 Infiniti EX35 Journey crossover utility wagon, at Ria's condo in suburban Washington. She was able to get out and drive while my wife, Mary Anne, and I shoveled snow after paying $60 to one itinerant worker and $150 to a group of ambulatory shovel carriers to do the job poorly. My 62-year-old body ached after the experience.

Lesson two was that all-wheel-drive vehicles are not all the same. In the first February blast of snow and ice, I discovered that Mitsubishi's claim of superior stability and traction for its 2010 Outlander XLS crossover utility vehicle, equipped with its patented Super All-Wheel Control, was just that—a claim. In strong crosswinds, ice and light snow, the Outlander wiggle-waggled its way along northbound Interstate 87.

The Mitsubishi Outlander XLS came with 18-inch-diameter "all-weather" radials. The Infiniti EX 35 Journey was shod with 17-inch-diameter "all-weather" tires. But the EX35 Journey proved a much more stable companion on roads pounded by sleet and other icy precipitation.

Perhaps it was a matter of getting what you paid for. Infiniti's all-wheel-drive compact crossover utility wagon, in size and other ways comparable to the Mitsubishi model, starts $11,000 higher than Mitsubishi's model.

The Mitsubishi makes a good show for the money in terms of build quality and appointments. But the EX35 Journey, in terms of technology and overall road performance, offers discernibly more.

That's understandable when you consider the platform histories of the Mitsubishi Outlander XLS and Infiniti EX35 Journey crossovers. Both are based on passenger cars—the Outlander on the often forgettable Lancer family sedan and the Infiniti EX35 Journey on the always memorable Infiniti G37 sports coupe.

The simplest way to differentiate the two is to say that the Outlander was built more for utility and economy. For example, it offers more cargo space than the Infiniti—a maximum 73 cubic feet of usable space versus 18.6 cubic feet usable for the EX35 Journey, which was built more for performance.

The EX35 comes with more power and torque—a 3.5-liter V-6 delivering 297 horsepower and 253 foot-pounds of torque versus a 3-liter V-6 producing 230 horsepower and 215 foot-pounds torque for the Outlander.

The EX35 has better balance (meaning it's less top-heavy) than the Outlander, partly because it runs closer to the ground—a ground clearance of 5.4 inches for the EX35 versus 8.5 inches for the Outlander.

Lower ground clearance/better balance usually equals better handling, which proved to be true in driving the EX35 Journey and Outlander XLS in the snow.

There is another lesson learned from our snow-and-ice driving experiences: No vehicle can trump the laws of physics and common sense: "Ice is ice and too fast is too fast on roads covered with snow and ice," Ria said. Each of us witnessed evidence of that truth in our respective drives of the EX35.

Operators of all-wheel-drive vehicles, in which power shifts from wheel to wheel on an as-needed basis, and dedicated four-wheel-drive trucks, in which power flows to all wheels simultaneously, apparently thought their drive systems allowed them to speed over ice. That hubris, for many of them, ended in crashes, spin-outs and overturned vehicles. They ignored the laws of physics and common sense best stated by Lou Ann's Law, an edict laid down by a California friend and automotive writer:

Regardless of your vehicle or its equipment, "never drive faster than your angels can fly."

The 2010 Infiniti EX35 Journey crossover utility wagon: You get what you pay for, in this case technology and overall road performance.

THE WASHINGTON POST

NUTS & BOLTS

By WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

COMPLAINT
We in the media should do a better job of explaining vehicle-use intent. We often describe cars, trucks and crossovers as if they are meant to serve the same purpose the same way. They are not. For example, the Mitsubishi Outlander, including the sporty GT, primarily is a utility wagon. Models such as the EX35 Journey are closer to sports cars. One will not effectively serve the use intent of the other.

RIDE, ACCELERATION AND HANDLING
It gets good marks in ride and handling, even on poorly cleared snowy roads. We didn't do much accelerating and would like to get this one back in dry weather.

HEAD-TURNING QUOTIENT
We're reluctant to call it and its rivals attractive, but we're getting used to the sleek-nose, big-butt look.

BODY/LAYOUT
A compact crossover utility vehicle. It's a front-engine, five-door vehicle available with rear-wheel drive or all-wheel drive and based on an Infiniti G37 sports coupe platform.

ENGINE-TRANSMISSION
It gets a standard 3.5-liter, double-overhead-cam, 24-valve V-6 that develops 297 horsepower at 6,800 revolutions per minute and 253 foot-pounds of torque at 4,800 rpm. The engine is mated to a five-speed transmission that can be shifted automatically or manually.

CAPACITIES
There are seats for five people. Maximum luggage capacity is 18.6 cubic feet. The fuel tank holds 20 gallons.

MILEAGE
We did lots of idling and more than a little wheel-spinning on ice. Our combined city-highway mileage was a pitiful 17 mpg.

SAFETY
Standard equipment includes four-wheel disc brakes (ventilated front, solid rear), antilock brake protection and electronic brake force distribution, electronic stability and traction control, and side and head air bags.

RECOMMENDED OPTIONAL SAFETY/ENTERTAINMENT ITEM FOR THE EX 35 JOURNEY
Get the available "Bose and Around View Monitor" system. It includes an 11-speaker Bose sound system in tandem with four outside cameras that give you a nearly 360-degree view.

PRICES
The base price is $37,400. Dealer's invoice price on that model is $34,549. Price as tested is $40,415, including $2,150 for the optional Bose and Around View Monitor and an $865 delivery charge. Dealer's price as tested is $37,276.

Worried Toyota dealers adding own voice to PR push

WASHINGTON (AP)—How rattled are Toyota dealers about the company's problems? Some dealerships nearly hired the same crisis public relations firm that handled the travails of socialite Paris Hilton, singer Chris Brown and a company that California called the state's worst inland polluter.

With Toyota waging a furious lobbying and advertising battle to protect its name following the recall of 8.5 million vehicles, many of its 1,200 dealers are taking matters into their own hands. A group in Southern California almost retained the PR firm Sitrick and Co. of Los Angeles.

Insiders said the idea was nixed after Toyota officials said the company should speak with one voice—theirs.

Dozens of dealers will lobby members of Congress this week as two House oversight committees hold hearings. Some dealers organized their own advertising campaigns; many are nervous and angry.

"As we get into the media circus and the congressional panels which may stir things up again, they're so afraid this is going to terrify customers and they just want to get their story out," said Cody Lusk, president of the American International Automobile Dealers Association.

The behind-the-scenes activities highlight dealers' worries about a crisis that has caused Toyota sales to plummet, and about a corporate response that some of them consider slow-footed and inadequate.

It also underscores their willingness to flex their muscle on Capitol Hill, where dealers have clout in every congressional district as major employers and pillars of the tax base and community.

Often encouraged and reimbursed by manufacturers, scores of dealers lobbied in recent months when Congress provided loans to struggling Chrysler and General Motors, and enacted the Cash for Clunkers program giving buyers money for trading gas guzzlers for more fuel efficient models.

"An overwhelming unified front is surely going to stir positive attention, and send a strong message of significance, commitment and support to our members of Congress," Tammy Darvish, vice president of four Toyota dealerships around Washington wrote Friday in an e-mail urging dealers to lobby Congress this week. "Every Toyota dealer is in a position to choose to either be a part of something or subject to it."

Among the restive dealers is Jack Fitzgerald, who owns Toyota dealerships in Gaithersburg, Md., and Chambersburg, Pa. He produced a 60-second commercial for television and his Web site in which he reassures customers, "Your car is safe to drive. Toyota says so. And your car is not going to depreciate. Jack says so."

A dealer for 44 years, Fitzgerald said he decided to run his own ads because he was unhappy with Toyota's response.

"They're so late doing it," he said of Toyota's ads addressing the recalls. "They should have been doing this two months ago. I'm doing it because they weren't doing anything."

Similar thinking spurred about 50 Toyota dealers in the Los Angeles area recently to reach out to Sitrick and Co. That firm is known for helping troubled celebrities and beleaguered companies put the best face on dire situations, including Greka Oil & Gas Co., whose California facilities have been plagued by oil spills and gas leaks.

In the end, the Southern California Toyota dealers decided against retaining Sitrick because they were satisfied with Toyota's public relations campaign, said Roger Hogan, a leader among the dealers.

"We didn't really have any different message than Toyota," Hogan said. "We decided to stand down and hold pat with Toyota's word out there."

Insiders tell a different story consistent with a frequent criticism of Toyota's handling of the recalls: Its Japan headquarters controls information, decision-making and operations too tightly.

The dealers decided against hiring Sitrick after Toyota told them at the last minute that it preferred to handle the public relations effort, said one executive, speaking on condition of anonymity to describe private conversations.

Toyota dealer John Symes from Pasadena, Calif., cited the same message Toyota officials delivered at a recent dealers convention in Orlando, Fla., saying the company should control the response.

Hogan said Toyota officials never pressured him to not retain Sitrick. Michael Sitrick, chairman and chief executive of the firm bearing his name, said his arrangement with the dealers was being finalized when things changed.

"I was told Toyota and the dealers felt since they would essentially be delivering the same message, that Toyota Corp. should handle all communications," Sitrick said.

Toyota spokeswoman Martha Voss said Toyota headquarters did not direct the dealers' decision. Officials in the company's Washington office praised dealers for wanting to persuade Congress and customers that Toyotas are safe.

"I think the dealer voices can be very effective because of the role they play in their communities," said Josephine Cooper, who heads the company's Washington office and did not rule out reimbursing the expenses of dealers who lobby this week.

Even in good times, manufacturers and dealers squabble over whether particular models are strong products or the adequacy of financing that factories offer dealers for their inventories. Toyota's problems have given the company and its dealers a common interest: quickly restoring faith in the brand so sales will recover, and avoiding as much bad publicity as possible.

"They are aligned because they have a common opponent," said Gerald C. Meyers, a professor at the University of Michigan business school and former auto executive. "And now that's Washington."

Focus

Faith complicates a mother's life-or-death decision on transplant

By BRIGID SCHULTE
(C) 2010, THE WASHINGTON POST

Maribel Perez breathes in short puffs, panting almost, through a hole cut into her trachea and covered demurely with a patch of white gauze. Clear tubes connected to a noisy machine in the living room of her small Alexandria apartment pump pure oxygen into her nostrils.

Crossing the room can leave the 36-year-old woman breathless. Crying sometimes feels like drowning.

Twice in the past two years, she has been told to prepare to die. Twice, she has been rejected for a lung transplant because her case was deemed too difficult. Twice, she has nearly been sent home to Peru because doctors told her there was nothing more they could do here, and if there were, her insurance wouldn't pay. She refused to believe them.

Then, doctors, social workers, friends, family, priests, politicians and strangers coalesced as a veritable army of guardian angels around her. They pushed for treatment and insurance. They found loopholes, hospital beds and ventilators. They prayed. They set up a "Save Maribel" Web site and Facebook page. They called news conferences in which Perez tearfully pleaded for her life. They raised $60,000 to save her.

So it was nothing less than shattering when, miraculously, a few weeks ago, one of the world's largest lung-transplant programs, at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, agreed to take her, and Perez said no.

Her reason had nothing to do with breath. It was because of blood.

Perez had become a Jehovah's Witness. The religion teaches that blood is sacred, the seat of one's soul, and that in the Bible, God specifically prohibits the consumption of blood, whether by mouth or through veins in a transfusion. Many Jehovah's Witnesses carry cards explaining that in an emergency they are not to receive blood and that no medical practitioner will be held liable if they die as a result.

"What's more important: five, six, 10 or 20 more years on Earth? Or living forever?" asked David Valdez, a Jehovah's Witness minister at the Kingdom Hall in Alexandria, Va., where Perez worshiped. Breaking God's law on blood, Valdez explained, could condemn one to an eternity of nothingness.

On Jan. 7, after one of many visits from fellow Jehovah's Witnesses, Perez told her husband, Lorenzo, that she had signed a medical directive refusing a blood transfusion. Hearing that, he said, was like being slammed in the chest. "I had been fighting so hard for so long to keep her alive, I felt betrayed," he said in Spanish. "I was so angry. It was like I didn't know her anymore." His wife had chosen to die. Without a transplant, as her doctor, Leslie Kingslow, explained, Perez has about a 50 percent chance of living an additional 18 to 24 months. Less if she contracts another infection. The two childhood bouts of inexpertly treated tuberculosis that so scarred her lungs also make hers a high-risk surgery that would almost certainly require a transfusion; without one, no transplant center would take her as a patient.

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Maribel Perez, of Alexandria, Va., wrestled with her decision about a lung transplant along with her husband, Lorenzo, and children Diana, 12, and Jason, 10. A Jehovah's Witness, her faith complicates the young mother's life-or-death decision.

In a panic, Lorenzo called out to his wife's army of guardians. They descended upon her like avenging angels. How could she sign something like this? The Witnesses could be wrong, they pleaded; other faiths interpret the Bible differently. When that failed to move her, they called her a hypocrite. Told her that she had wasted so many people's time and faith. Then they softened. How could she leave her two children after struggling so mightily to stay with them? How could a loving God want her to choose death?

Perez, dressed in hospital socks and flannel pajamas, sat on the side of a twin bed, her head bowed, her eyes locked onto the bare wood floor. When she spoke, it was in a faint whisper. "Mi relación con Dios es más importante que todo," was all she said. My relationship with God is more important than anything.

Four years ago, Perez began getting dizzy and falling. She could never seem to catch her breath. A friend took her to a free lung clinic run by the National Institutes of Health for the homeless and uninsured. There, Mark Gladwin diagnosed severe pulmonary fibrosis. The doctor began to follow her closely. She was so young to be terminally sick. The only way to extend her life was a lung transplant, which can cost at least a half a million dollars. With no money, immigration papers or insurance, Perez's prospects were poor.

In 2007, she was repeatedly hospitalized and sent to a hospice, where doctors recommended that she return to Peru to die in her mother's care. But friends and advocates found the Kaiser Permanente Bridge program, which offers three years of discounted insurance to the uninsured. She healed enough to go home.

In the fall of 2008, she contracted pneumonia. Again, she was hospitalized. Again, doctors told her to prepare to die.

Instead, she spent a year at the Specialty Hospital of Washington, with social worker Paula Hammond calling Kaiser every two weeks for approval to extend her stay.

Hammond arranged for surgeons from Inova Fairfax (Va.) Hospital, the area's only lung transplant center, to evaluate Perez. They said the operation would be too risky.

Last spring, Laura Wilson, 81, a friend who met Perez through a neighbor and became like a mother to her, learned that Gladwin had moved to Pittsburgh to become chief of the pulmonary division there. She appealed to him: Maribel has insurance now! You can help her now!

Gladwin agreed to see Perez if Kaiser would pay for the transplant and intensive follow-up care.

Perez could not contain her joy. "I want to be a part of my children's lives," she said then. "For a mother, even one more day is precious."

But Kaiser at first refused to pay for the transplant, Perez's doctors said, telling them that Pittsburgh was not in Kaiser's network. Kaiser officials would not comment on Perez's case.

Her advocates wrote letters and sent appeals and, finally, Kaiser agreed to cover the transplant as an out-of-network expense, meaning Perez needed about $80,000 for the co-payment. Her advocates set up a fund through the Catholic Archdiocese of Arlington and had news conferences pleading for donations here and in Peru. Their efforts netted $30,000. Then Wilson found the Ray Tye Medical Aid Foundation in Massachusetts, which agreed to match those funds.

About 1,400 lung transplants a year are done in the United States, compared with 15,000 kidneys and 2,200 hearts. The procedure is fairly new and survival rates are low, averaging five to seven years, said Joseph Pilewski, medical director of Pittsburgh's lung transplant program. "If your other option is a 90 percent chance of dying within the year," Pilewski said, "then a lung transplant is a good option."

Perez has no other options, her doctors say. Hospitals in Peru, where Kaiser recommended she return last summer, could not handle her case, they say, nor could her damaged lungs survive a trip there. Caught between borders, political policy and medical ethics, her life hangs in existential balance.

"As a physician, if we were to be distracted by someone's insurance status, their immigration status or other sociopolitical variables ... then we lose sight of our primary mission: to take care of people," Gladwin said. "Maribel is a young woman. She has young children. She's the kind of person a transplant was designed for. From a social-justice standpoint, you could ask, why is it fair to give a lung transplant to a 65-year-old with emphysema who's smoked for 40 years and not to a young mother?"

In mid-December, Perez and her husband traveled to Pittsburgh for five days of testing. In a Dec. 23 letter, the medical team deemed her an "acceptable candidate for transplant." She would join about 30 people on their waiting list.

Her army of guardian angels rejoiced. Then, early last month, they noticed she was no longer returning their calls.

After she signed the directive refusing transfusions, Perez was in torment, she said. She knew she was signing away her last chance at life.

Perez was raised Catholic, but a neighbor who was a Jehovah's Witness impressed her with his knowledge of the Bible. Two years ago, she began attending services and Bible study classes. Lorenzo went a few times, but it wasn't for him. Still, he was happy his fragile wife had found a place of solace. What no one understood, she explained later, was that in her darkest hours, when she lay dying in the hospice, and throughout that long, lonely year at Specialty Hospital, the word of God was the only thing that sustained her.

Maribel Perez, a 36-year-old mother of two from Alexandria, Va., needs a lung transplant to extend her life and free her from an oxygen tank. But she is a Jehovah's Witness, and the religion teaches that blood is sacred and that God prohibits the consumption of blood, whether by mouth or through veins in a transfusion.

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Perez feared less for her eternal life than that God would punish her by taking her life if she went ahead with the transplant. "I was worried God wouldn't let me live after the operation," she said. Three days later, Perez told Lorenzo she'd changed her mind.

"I began to think how much I loved my children, these marvelous gifts from God," she explained, gulping for air as tears rolled down her face. "God loves. He does not demand that we follow rules. The rules are ours." Her heart told her that God wanted her to choose life.

Perez no longer talks to Jehovah's Witnesses, nor they to her. It is hard, she said. They are like her family. But the religion "disfellowships," or excommunicates, members who disobey its teachings. Contacted by a reporter and asked about Perez, a member of her congregation said, "She is not a Jehovah's Witness," and hung up.

Now, Lorenzo said, it is as if they are approaching the door to the future with the key in their hand, ready to turn the lock. Perez, who has difficulty walking into the next room, must once more travel to Pittsburgh to sign a new directive, permitting doctors to use blood during her operation. But first, her doctors say she must regain the 14 pounds her already-thin frame has lost since she got out of the hospital. The transplant doctors want to know how she will pay for medical care once her insurance expires. She doesn't know but hopes that in Peru, it will be cheaper.

She is still not used to the bustle of activity in the small apartment after so long in a lonely hospital room. Her son, Jason, wanders in to tell about his day before running off to play a computer game. Lorenzo shuffles through the endless paperwork that grows out of a serious illness. And her daughter, Diana, sings her a new pop song, holding the handle of her mother's portable oxygen tank like a rock star's microphone. The two giggle. They pinkie-swear on a secret that they promise to talk more about later, once the lights are out, when they will drift off to sleep, together.

Life & Style

'Hurt Locker' takes 6 prizes at UK film awards

LONDON (AP)—Britain's love of the underdog triumphed Sunday as intimate war drama "The Hurt Locker" beat 3D spectacular "Avatar" to take six prizes, including best picture, at the British Academy Film Awards.

Kathryn Bigelow won the best-director battle with "Avatar"'s James Cameron, her ex-husband, for her intense depiction of a bomb-disposal squad in Iraq.

"It means so much that this film seems to be touching people's hearts and minds," Bigelow said.

Both films had eight nominations for the British awards, considered an indicator of possible success at the Academy Awards in Los Angeles next month. "Avatar" and "The Hurt Locker" each has nine Oscar nominations.

"The Hurt Locker" also took British prizes for original screenplay cinematography, editing and sound.

"Avatar" won awards for production design and visual effects for its vivid vision of a distant moon populated by a blue-skinned species called the Na'vi.

"Hurt Locker" screenwriter Mark Boal dedicated the best-film prize to the hope of peace "and bringing the boys and girls back home."

Bigelow also paid tribute to soldiers serving in Iraq, and said the goal of the film was "putting a bit of a spotlight on a very, very difficult situation."

"I hope that in some small way this film can begin a debate ... and bring closure to this conflict," she said.

The "Avatar"/"Hurt Locker" battle initially seemed like a David-and-Goliath story. Cameron's last feature, "Titanic," won 11 Oscars, including picture and director. "Avatar" is a global phenomenon that has taken more than $2 billion at the box office.

"Hurt Locker" has made about a hundredth that much.

"It did not seem like a slam-dunk commercial proposition," said Boal, who thanked Bigelow and the cast for making "an unpopular story about an unpopular war."

Homegrown British talent did not go home empty-handed. Rising star Carey Mulligan was named best actress for playing a precocious teenager in 1960s London in "An Education."

Colin Firth was named best actor for his performance as a bereaved Englishman in California in Tom Ford's "A Single Man."

Firth said he almost declined the award-winning role, which has also earned him an Oscar nomination. He said he had been about to turn it down by e-mail "when someone came to repair my fridge." He never sent the e-mail.

"I would like to thank the fridge guy," Firth said.

Firth said he had emerged from working with fashion designer-turned-director Ford "better groomed, more fragrant and more nominated than one has ever been before."

Austrian actor Christoph Waltz, already a hot Oscar favorite, won the supporting actor prize for his turn as a chilling, charming Nazi colonel in "Inglourious Basterds." The supporting actress award went to Mo'nique for "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire."

Director Duncan Jones took the award for best British debut for his lost-in-space drama "Moon."

A tearful Jones, whose father is musician David Bowie, said it had taken him a long time to figure out what he wanted to do with his life.

"Finally, I think I've found what I love doing," he said.

Earlier, Kate Winslet, Audrey Tautou, Quentin Tarantino, Vanessa Redgrave and "Twilight" stars Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart all walked the red carpet before the ceremony at London's Royal Opera House, with Prince William on hand to add real royalty to showbiz aristocracy.

Mulligan turned heads in a sweeping monochrome floral dress by Vionnet.

She described the experience of being nominated as "like being punched—nicely."

Prince William, wearing a traditional Saville Row suit, received huge cheers and stopped to chat with waiting fans and have his picture snapped outside the opera house.

William presented a lifetime achievement award to Redgrave, and also was announced as the new president of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts, which presents the awards—a role once held by his grandfather, Prince Philip.

"Fish Tank," Andrea Arnold's drama about a feisty London teenager, was named best British film. The award for best animated feature went to Pixar's soaring 3D adventure "Up," and Jacques Audiard's prison thriller "A Prophet" was named best foreign-language film.

"Twilight" actress Kristen Stewart won the rising star award, decided by the public.

Stewart was cheered loudly by hundreds of film fans when she arrived at the opera house—but even she admitted to being star-struck.

"I'm sitting right behind Kate Winslet, and every time she turns around I wish I didn't exist," Stewart said. "I love her."

British actor Colin Firth, right, poses with his award for the movie *A Single Man*, at the British Academy Film Awards 2010, at The Royal Opera House in London, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.
AP

Winners of British Academy Awards

LONDON (AP)–Winners of the 2010 Orange British Academy Film Awards, presented Sunday:

Film–"**The Hurt Locker**"
British Film–"**Fish Tank**"
Director–**Kathryn Bigelow**, "The Hurt Locker"
Actor–**Colin Firth**, "A Single Man"
Actress–**Carey Mulligan**, "An Education"
Supporting Actor–**Christoph Waltz**, "Iglourious Basterds"
Supporting Actress–**Mo'nique**, "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire."
Rising Star–**Kristen Stewart**
British Debut–**Director Duncan Jones**, "Moon"
Original Screenplay–"**The Hurt Locker**"
Adapted Screenplay–"**Up in the Air**"
Film Not in the English Language–"**A Prophet**"
Music–**Michael Giacchino**, "Up"
Cinematography–"**The Hurt Locker**"
Editing–"**The Hurt Locker**"
Production Design–"**Avatar**"
Costume Design–"**The Young Victoria**"
Sound–"**The Hurt Locker**"
Visual Effects–"**Avatar**"
Makeup and Hair–"**The Young Victoria**"
Animated Feature–"**Up**"
Short Film–"**I Do Air**"
Short Animation -"**Mother of Many**"
Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema–**Camera technician Joe Dunton**
Academy Fellowship–**Vanessa Redgrave**.

Bristol Palin seeks ex's financial records

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—Bristol Palin's lawyer is seeking permission to subpoena media outlets such as Playgirl magazine and CNN to determine how much money Levi Johnston, the father of her child, has made to calculate an appropriate level of child support.

Attorney Thomas Van Flein filed a motion seeking permission to conduct out-of-state depositions and obtain financial records from the magazine, CNN, Entertainment Tonight, Vanity Fair, the National Enquirer, Star magazine and Insider.

It could take a judge weeks to decide on the request by Palin, the teenage daughter of former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, the 2008 Republican vice presidential candidate.

Van Flein told The Associated Press on Thursday he didn't expect any First Amendment issues with the request of the media companies.

"At this point, we do not expect a legal battle with any of the entities we are trying to subpoena since we're not looking for confidential source information," he said. "We're merely looking for payment information."

Johnston, 19, has said he wasn't paid for many of the interviews. His attorney, Rex Butler, didn't immediately return a call Thursday seeking comment.

It's the latest twist in the ongoing drama between Johnston and Palin after the birth of their son, Tripp, in December 2008. The pregnancy was announced three days after Sarah Palin was introduced as John McCain's running mate.

The unmarried couple broke up after their son's birth, with much of the subsequent wrangling playing out in the media.

Van Flein said the Wednesday filing is routine as they try to determine Johnston's income.

Johnston, who has posed nude for Playgirl for both online and print publications, also hopes to land acting jobs.

In court documents filed earlier, Johnston said he made $101,000 last year, but notes that income in the entertainment field can be erratic. A previous estimate of his income was $105,000.

Palin is seeking $1,688 a month in child support, down from an initial request of $1,750 after Johnston's income was adjusted. She's also asking for retroactive payments to the boy's birth, or $19,232 total. That does not include $4,400 Johnston has already paid in child support.

The filing was first reported by the celebrity Web site TMZ.

Message of Appreciation

We the family of the Late

Fidel Atalig Mendiola

Wish to express our most heartfelt appreciation to all our relatives and friends for your unending love and support during our most difficult times. Your presence during the Afternoon & Nightly Rosaries, Funeral Mass and the Burial Site has helped us endure our great loss.

Special Thanks To: Fr. Isaac M. Ayuyu, Fr. Delfin Tumaca, Monsignor Louis Antonelli, our Techa Mrs. Lucia T. Mundo, all our hard working cooks, Ada's Funeral Home, Mr. & Mrs. Joaquin Flores (Freedom Air & Staff), Ambros Inc. Boys, International Bridge Corporation (I.B.C.), Smithbridge, Mr. & Mrs. Frank Quinata, Hansen's Helicopter–Mr. Jon Walker & Boys, & Mr. & Mrs. Jack Castro, to all our relatives and friends who came from afar especially from U.S. Mainland, Guam, Saipan & Tinian and to all those who helped in so many ways.

Your sympathy, condolences, prayers and your personal help will forever be treasured in our hearts.

Un Dangkulu Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase

"Your thoughts and most especially your prayers are sincerely appreciated." Written by: Fidel A. Mendiola on January 31, 2010

Si Fermina (Minang), I Famagu'on-na yan I Familian-niha

‘Shutter Island’ makes waves with $40.2M debut

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Martin Scorsese and Leonardo DiCaprio’s voyage to “Shutter Island” has landed them at No. 1 at the weekend box office.

Their creepy crime thriller set at a remote insane asylum opened with $40.2 million, according to studio estimates Sunday. A Paramount Pictures release, “Shutter Island” is the fourth collaboration for Scorsese and DiCaprio and the best opening yet for both the director and star.

Scorsese’s previous personal best was $26.9 million with his 2006 Academy Awards champ “The Departed,” which also starred DiCaprio. The biggest previous debut for DiCaprio was $30.1 million for 2002’s “Catch Me If You Can.”

Along with “The Departed,” DiCaprio and Scorsese also worked together on “Gangs of New York” and “The Aviator,” both of them earning best-picture nominations at the Oscars.

“The two of them have great chemistry, and you see it on screen,” said Rob Moore, vice chairman at Paramount.

1. ***“Shutter Island,”*** $40.2 million.
2. ***“Valentine’s Day,”*** $17.2 million.
3. ***“Avatar,”*** $16.1 million.
4. ***“Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief,”*** $15.3 million.
5. ***“The Wolfman,”*** $9.8 million.
6. ***“Dear John,”*** $7.3 million.
7. ***“The Tooth Fairy,”*** $4.5 million.
8. ***“Crazy Heart,”*** $3 million.
9. ***“From Paris With Love,”*** $2.5 million.
10. ***“Edge of Darkness,”*** $2.2 million.

Roman Polanski’s thriller “The Ghost Writer” got off to a big start in limited release, pulling in $179,000 at four theaters in New York City and Los Angeles for a whopping average of $44,750 a cinema. That compares to a $13,440 average in 2,991 theaters for “Shutter Island.”

The film likely benefited from months of press coverage over Polanski’s arrest in Switzerland last fall and his possible extradition to the United States, which he fled in 1978 after pleading guilty to unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor.

“If not for the notoriety in his public life, no, I don’t think this would have done as well,” said Paul Dergarabedian, box-office analyst for Hollywood.com. “It put a spotlight on Polanski, maybe not for all the right reasons. But they say there’s no such thing as bad publicity, especially when it comes to marketing a movie.”

Released by Summit Entertainment, “The Ghost Writer” stars Ewan McGregor in the title role, a man hired to punch up the dreary memoirs of a former British prime minister (Pierce Brosnan) who has been accused of ordering the abduction of terrorism suspects and handing them over for torture by the CIA.

The previous weekend’s top movie, the all-star romance “Valentine’s Day,” slipped to No. 2 with $17.2 million, falling a steep 69 percent from its $56.3 million debut. The Warner Bros. release raised its total to $87.4 million after 10 days in theaters.

The science-fiction sensation “Avatar” is still going strong after two months in theaters, coming in third with $16.1 million and raising its record domestic total to $687.8 million. Worldwide, the 20th Century Fox film has taken in $2.47 billion.

Adapted from Dennis Lehane’s novel, “Shutter Island” stars DiCaprio as a U.S. marshal caught up in conspiracies and delusions while investigating the disappearance of a patient at a hospital for the criminally insane.

“Shutter Island” had been scheduled for release last October and was considered a potential Oscar contender given the awards success of Scorsese and DiCaprio’s earlier collaborations.

Just six weeks before the planned release last fall, Paramount abruptly bumped “Shutter Island” to February, the studio calling it an economic decision that would increase the film’s profit potential.

“We knew that more time was only going to help us get the word out and get a broader audience,” Moore said.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Hollywood.com. Final figures will be released Monday.

AP

Actor Leonardo DiCaprio, left, and director Martin Scorsese attend the premiere of “Shutter Island” at The Ziegfeld Theatre, in New York, on Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2010.

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Shutter Island

Friday		4:00	7:00	9:45
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	9:45
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:0	
Mon thru Thurs		4:00	7:00	

Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Ruffalo
Thriller • Rated R

Synopsis

Mark Ruffalo and Leonardo DiCaprio team up as a pair of U.S. Marshals who travel to a secluded island off the coast of Massachusetts to search for an escaped mental patient, uncovering a web of deception along the way as they battle the forces of nature and a prison riot in this Martin Scorsese-helmed period picture. Laeta Kalogridis adapts Dennis Lehane's novel of the same name, with Paramount Pictures and Columbia Pictures splitting production and distribution duties.

The Lightning Thief

Friday		4:20	7:10	9:40
Saturday	1:30	4:20	7:10	9:40
Sunday	1:30	4:20	7:10	
Mon thru Thurs		4:20	7:10	

Logan Lerman, Pierce Brosnan
Fantasy • Rated PG

Synopsis

Trouble-prone Percy Jackson is having problem in high school—but that's the least of his challenges. It's the 21st century, but the gods of Mount Olympus seem to have walked out of the pages of Percy's Greek mythology texts and into his life. Percy has learned that his real father is Poseidon, god of the sea, which means Percy is a demigod—half human, half god. At the same time, Zeus, the king of all gods, has accused Percy of stealing Zeus' lightning bolt…the original weapon of mass destruction.

The Wolfman

Friday		4:10	7:30	9:35
Saturday	1:20	4:10	7:30	9:35
Sunday	1:20	4:10	7:30	
Mon thru Thurs		4:10	7:30	

Benicio del Toro, Anthony Hopkins
Horror • Rated R

Synopsis

Universal Studios resurrects the classic lycanthrope with this tale of an American who experiences an unsettling transformation after returning to his ancestral home in Victorian-era Great Britain and being attacked by a rampaging werewolf. His brother having recently vanished without a trace, haunted nobleman Lawrence Talbot (Benicio Del Toro) returns to his family estate to investigate. What he discovers upon reuniting with his estranged father (Anthony Hopkins), however, is a destiny far darker than his blackest nightmares.

From Paris With Love

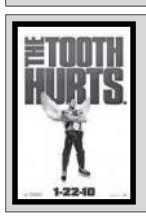
Friday		4:15	7:25	9:30
Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:25	9:30
Sunday	1:15	4:15	7:25	
Mon thru Thurs		4:15	7:25	

John Travolta, Jonathan Rhys-Meyers
Crime • Rated R

Valentine’s Day

Friday		4:30	7:20	9:50
Saturday	1:10	4:30	7:20	9:50
Sunday	1:10	4:30	7:20	
Mon thru Thurs		4:30	7:20	

Julia Roberts, Anne Hathaway
Comedy • Rated PG 13



The Tooth Fairy

Friday		4:05	7:05	9:55
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:05	9:55
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:05	
Mon thru Thurs		4:05	7:05	

Dwayne Johnson, Ashley Judd
Comedy Drama • Rated PG

Avatar

Friday		3:55	6:55	10:00
Saturday	12:50	3:55	6:55	10:00
Sunday	12:50	3:55	6:55	
Mon thru Thurs		3:55	6:55	

Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana
Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

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Motion picture academy honors nerds of filmmaking

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—Forty-five men you’ve probably never heard of were honored with an Academy Awards ceremony of their own that recognized scientific and technical achievements in moviemaking.

The engineers behind the latest in ambient occlusion, digital intermediate processing, sub-pixel offsets and micro-positioning platforms were celebrated at a Saturday night gala at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and hosted by a very unscientific Elizabeth Banks.

The 36-year-old actress joked that she would “read—yet not fully understand—our journey through the scientific and technical awards.”

Wearing a sparkling white gown and standing in front of four giant Oscar statues, Banks presented 15 plaques and certificates to scientists from Germany, Sweden, Austria, England, New Zealand, Hungary, Denmark, Japan and the United States.

The men were honored for developing systems to improve color on film, advancing performance-capture technology, creating new means to light actors in computer-generated scenes and building high-tech scanners used in modern filmmaking. You may have seen the results of their work in films such as “King Kong,” “The Lord of the Rings,” “Spider-Man 2” and “Iron Man.”

AP

Actress and host Elizabeth Banks arrives at the Scientific and Technical Academy Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif. on Saturday, Feb. 20, 2010.

While the March 7 Academy Awards ceremony will be all A-list glitz and televised glam, the Sci-Tech Awards are an off-camera, low-key event, with one humble scientist after another taking the stage and nervously thanking his family and colleagues.

Double-winner Tony Sedivy, who helped develop a film scanner and a 3D hardware system, said receiving the academy honors was “the highlight of my life.”

Another honoree, Richard Kirk, clutched his golden plaque with a tiny Oscar on it and said, “I only hope one day I can be as awesome as my friends and family will think I am with this.”

A jazz quintet played as winners pushed away from their filet mignon and Chilean sea bass dinners to accept their awards on stage. One tried to explain the genesis of his invention to Banks, who shrugged and smiled playfully.

The star, whose credits include “Seabiscuit” and “The 40-Year-Old Virgin,” effortlessly discussed film emulsion technology, spectral response and point-based color bleeding for indirect illuminations as she presented the awards with a lot of help from a telepromter.

AP

In this March 3, 2009 file photo, actor Sean Penn talks during a press conference lobbying the state of California to recognize Harvey Milk Day in San Francisco.

Sean Penn charged with battery in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Actor-director Sean Penn was charged Friday with battery and vandalism charges stemming from an altercation with a photographer in Brentwood last fall.

Penn will be arraigned March 22 on the two misdemeanor charges, said Los Angeles city attorney's spokesman Frank Mateljan.

A phone message for Penn's attorney, Barry Hirsch, was not immediately returned.

Penn will not be required to appear in court if he is represented by an attorney.

Mateljan said Penn kicked a photographer during a dustup in October. The photographer's camera also was damaged. The incident was captured on a video posted by celebrity Web site TMZ.com in which Penn is seen kicking at a photographer and repeatedly telling the photographer to "get out."

If convicted, Penn could face up to 18 months in jail.

Penn is the latest actor charged in Los Angeles for altercations with the paparazzi. Charges against rapper Kanye West and actor Gerard Butler were recently dismissed after both men completed community service after scuffles with celebrity photographers.

West, who was charged after breaking a photographer's flash at Los Angeles International Airport in September 2008, also paid for the broken equipment.

Penn has won two best actor Oscars for roles in "Mystic River" and "Milk."

During the 1980s, he had several run-ins with photographers and a movie extra that resulted in a short jail stint. One of the incidents involved allegations Penn assaulted two photographers in Nashville, Tenn., in 1987. He pleaded no contest and received a suspended sentence.

The same year he received a 60-day jail sentence for punching an extra while filming "Colors." He was on probation at the time for hitting a man he thought tried to kiss his wife, singer Madonna.

Connick performs for students at White House

WASHINGTON (AP)—Harry Connick Jr. told students Sunday that music can get people through the darkest times—even a disaster like Hurricane Katrina, which devastated his hometown, New Orleans, in 2005.

The Grammy-winning composer and singer was welcomed to the White House by first lady Michelle Obama, who invited him to perform for members of a Washington elementary school glee club.

Connick invited one of the children to join him and his band onstage and help sing "When the Saints Go Marching In."

Mrs. Obama told the children that just as singing in their club makes them happy, music can help lift the spirits of a city like New Orleans.

"These guys aren't just playing music and earning money and performing, but they're also community leaders, too," Mrs. Obama said. "Even if you can sing and dance, the question is: What do you give back?"

Connick co-founded the Musicians' Village in New Orleans, which helped provide housing for displaced musicians after Katrina. Some of the musicians who performed with Connick on Sunday live in the village.

AP

Harry Connick Jr., holds the microphone as Derrick Hopkins Jr., 10, sings during a special preview for local music students, of the talent that will be performing at the White House annual Governors Ball, at the White House in Washington, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Connick performed later Sunday night as part of the National Governors Association's Governor's Ball.

Actor Andrew Koenig missing in Vancouver

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP)—Police are asking for the public's help in locating actor Andrew Koenig, who had a recurring role on the 1980s sitcom "Growing Pains."

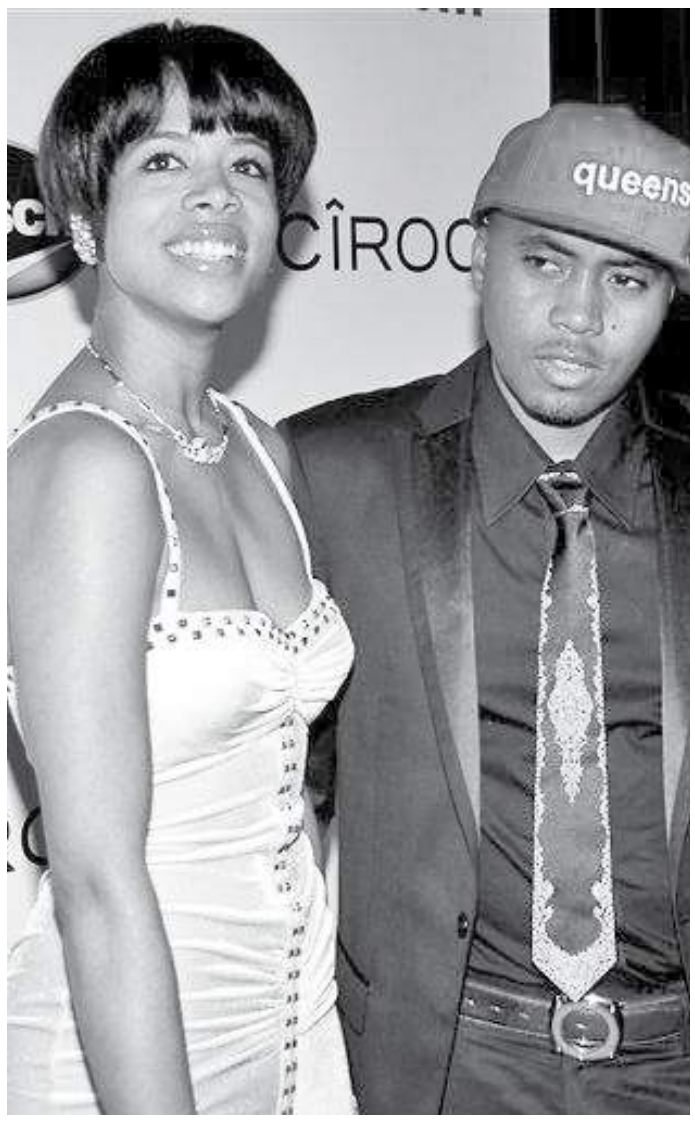
Vancouver police say Koenig was visiting friends in West Vancouver when he went missing. He was last seen on Feb. 14.

A statement released by the police department says Koenig "has recently been despondent and his family and friends are concerned for his well-being."

Koenig, 41, lives in Venice, Calif., but at one time lived in Vancouver. He is the son of Walter Koenig, who played Chekov on the "Star Trek" television series and movies.

On "Growing Pains" Koenig played Boner, a pal of star Kirk Cameron's character Mike.

Nas pleads not guilty to contempt in divorce case



In this Feb. 10, 2008 file photo, singer Kelis, left, and Nas pose on the press line at the Entertainment Weekly Island Def Jam Grammy party in Los Angeles.

AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Nas faces a criminal contempt charge for unpaid child and spousal support in his divorce from fellow singer Kelis (kehl-EES').

The rapper pleaded not guilty through his attorney and was ordered back for a March hearing in Los Angeles.

Kelis' attorney says Nas (NAHZ) is $200,000 behind on child and spousal support. He was ordered to pay more than $51,000 per month to his former wife and infant son in December.

Judge David S. Cunningham III, who is overseeing the divorce proceedings, said Friday it's starting to look like the rapper is trying to evade court orders.

One of Nas' attorneys, Anthony Ukran, told Cunningham the rapper needs more time to prepare his defense and show he's unable to pay the court-ordered support amounts.

Kelis filed for divorce in May.

Stepson's drug habits put new marriage on the rocks

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I have been married five months, and a problem has come up. It's my wife's 20-year-old son, "Danny." He uses drugs, and he does it in our house. He also allows the garbage to pile up in his room to the point that the stench invades the entire house.

We have had to install locks on all the internal doors because Danny steals from us. He also has his girlfriend and drug-using cousin over for "sleepovers."

Last night I was so upset I told my wife I was tired of the drugs and the filth, and if Danny doesn't straighten out, I am going to turn him in to the authorities. My wife now barely speaks to me, and she's making me feel like I'm the enemy. Was I wrong to put my foot down?

CONFLICTED IN ST. JOE, MO.

DEAR CONFLICTED: Not in my book. Danny appears to be an addict living the lifestyle of an addict, which includes stealing and hanging around with others who use drugs. The garbage may be piling up because he's so stoned he doesn't notice.

I don't know how long you all have been living like this, but if you married your wife under these circumstances, she may expect you to continue to tolerate it.

As long as she allows her son to use drugs and live the way he is, nothing will change. Please recognize that your wife is her son's enabler. A loving mother should insist that he get help and clean up his act. What you must decide is whether you're willing to live like this for the rest of your life, because you can't change this lady and her son. Only they can do that, and they do not appear inclined to do so.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My 6-year-old son, Perry, is autistic and loves to say "Good morning" to people when we're out -- no matter what time of day it is. It surprises me how many people will not reply. Why is that?

Would it be so difficult to just say something in return? Have we become lost in cell phones, iPods and other electronic devices to the extent that we have forgotten how to be polite?

You never know when a simple "good morning" will make someone happy—and you might even find yourself smiling more.

PARENT OF A SPECIAL CHILD

DEAR PARENT: Your child's disability may make some of the people he's greeting uncomfortable. Because the greeting is not appropriate, they may be unsure how to respond. It's sad, because it only takes a moment to say, "Hi," and the validation would give your son a jolt of pleasure.

If, however, you are disappointed because your son is getting no response from individuals who are using their cell phones, please know you're a member of a very large club. I hear the same complaint from mothers, fathers and grandparents who would also like a little courtesy from distracted relatives who are too absorbed in their cell phones, iPods and Blackberrys to make eye contact or converse.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: With today's economic woes, more and more people are out of work. I was lucky to find a job only three months after relocating to California, and I'm working with a wonderful group of people.

At the end of the year, holiday bonuses were given out. To my surprise, I was given one. In addition, I was given five days of paid holiday strictly on the company. Would it be appropriate to write a thank-you note to the president of the company? I'm truly grateful to have this job.

GRATEFUL EMPLOYEE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

DEAR GRATEFUL: A thank-you note is always appreciated. Not only would it be appropriate, but it's also an intelligent and diplomatic way of calling attention to yourself.

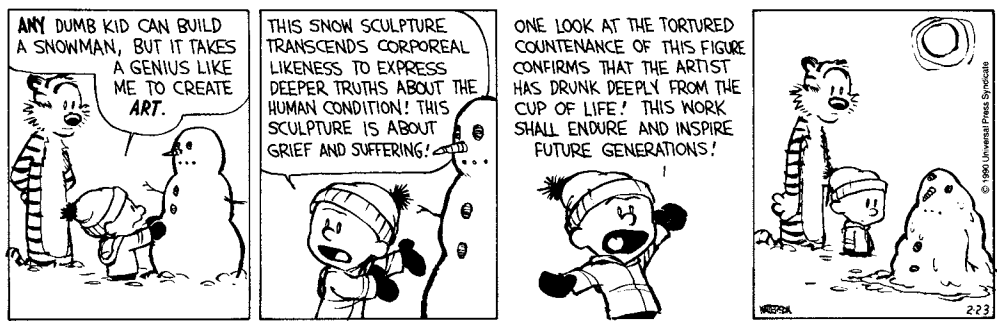
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


ANY DUMB KID CAN BUILD A SNOWMAN, BUT IT TAKES A GENIUS LIKE ME TO CREATE ART.
THIS SNOW SCULPTURE TRANSCENDS CORPOREAL LIKENESS TO EXPRESS DEEPER TRUTHS ABOUT THE HUMAN CONDITION! THIS SCULPTURE IS ABOUT GRIEF AND SUFFERING!
ONE LOOK AT THE TORTURED COUNTENANCE OF THIS FIGURE CONFIRMS THAT THE ARTIST HAS DRUNK DEEPLY FROM THE CUP OF LIFE! THIS WORK SHALL ENDURE AND INSPIRE FUTURE GENERATIONS!
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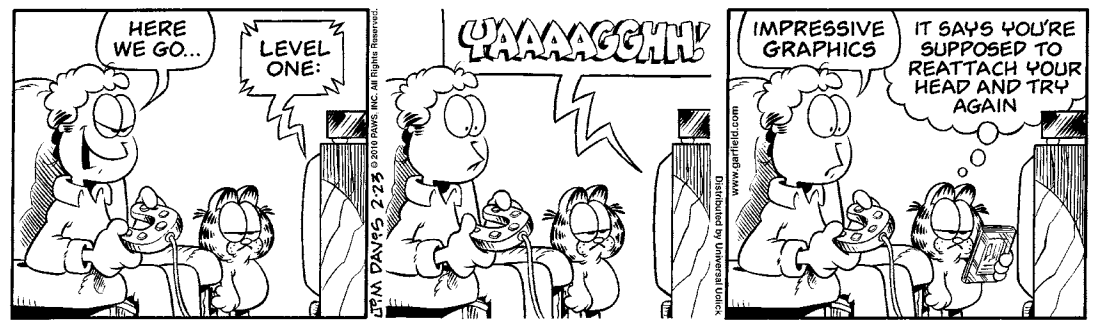
2-23

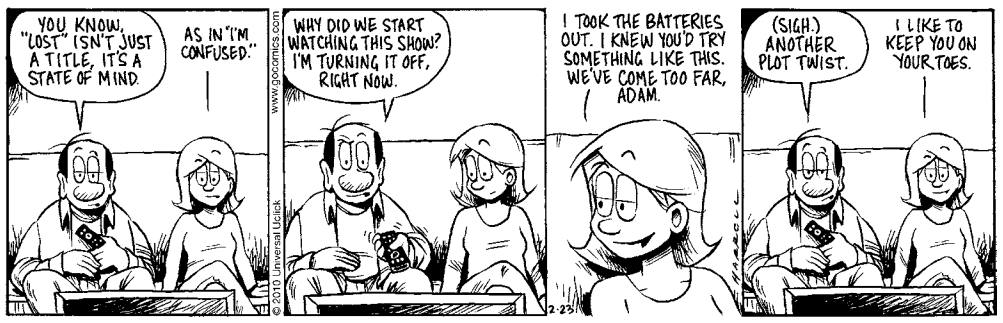
Garfield®

By Jim Davis


HERE WE GO...
LEVEL ONE:
YAAAAGGHH!
IMPRESSIVE GRAPHICS
IT SAYS YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO REATTACH YOUR HEAD AND TRY AGAIN
JIM DAVIS 2-23 © 2010 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved.
www.garfield.com
Distributed by Universal Uclick

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


YOU KNOW, "LOST" ISN'T JUST A TITLE, IT'S A STATE OF MIND.
AS IN "I'M CONFUSED."
WHY DID WE START WATCHING THIS SHOW? I'M TURNING IT OFF, RIGHT NOW.
I TOOK THE BATTERIES OUT. I KNEW YOU'D TRY SOMETHING LIKE THIS. WE'VE COME TOO FAR, ADAM.
(SIGH.) ANOTHER PLOT TWIST.
I LIKE TO KEEP YOU ON YOUR TOES.
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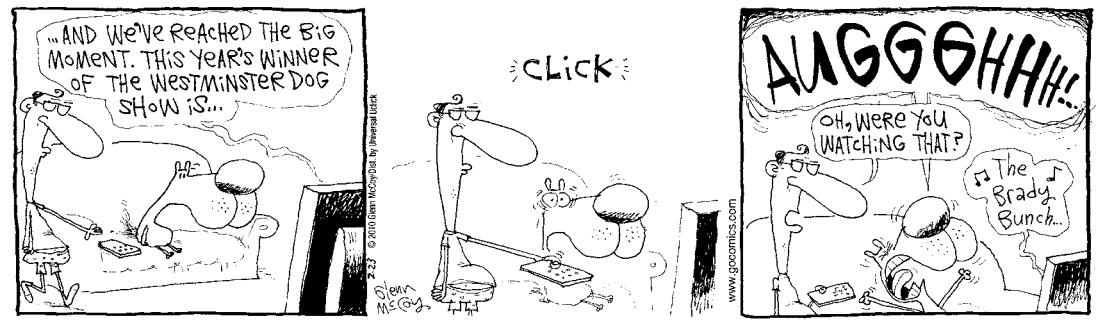
www.gocomics.com
2-23

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


...AND WE'VE REACHED THE BIG MOMENT. THIS YEAR'S WINNER OF THE WESTMINSTER DOG SHOW IS...
CLICK
AUGGGHHH!!
OH, WERE YOU WATCHING THAT?
The Brady Bunch...
2-23 © 2010 Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Uclick
www.gocomics.com

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 There's a lot of this ...
5 ... in this
8 — gin fizz
12 Sandwich cookie
13 Crony
14 Full house, e.g.
15 Wrenches
17 Memorization method
18 Got a look at
19 Prayer
21 Parsley piece
24 Algerian port
25 Baseball's Hershiser
26 Controversial punishment
30 Newhart or Hope
31 "Million Dollar Baby" star
32 Life story, for short
33 Droopy-eared dogs
35 Heart of the matter
36 Historic times
37 Sound portion
38 Cup holder
41 Possess
42 A deadly sin
43 All aglitter
48 Neighborhood
49 Annoy
50 Loathe
51 Catherine who wed Henry VIII
52 Ph. bk. info
53 Elliptical

DOWN
1 "Mayday!"
2 Dadaist Jean
3 Meadow
4 Adenoid neighbor
5 Jet forth
6 Corn spike
7 Losers
8 Get smaller
9 Asian nation
10 Aware of
11 First place?
16 Rundown horse
20 File crosser
21 Weeps loudly
22 Item on stage
23 Singer McEntire
24 October birthstones
26 Administers an oath of office to
27 Footnote abbr.
28 Unless (Lat.)
29 Head for
31 Paddock pop
34 Beverage of the gods
35 Overly enthusiastic
37 Plant bristle
38 High-five, e.g.
39 Emanation
40 Addict
41 Erstwhile acorns
44 In favor of
45 Restroom, for short
46 Greek vowel
47 Benicio — Toro

Solution time: 21 mins.

L	E	I	■	M	A	R	G	E	■	C	H	E
A	R	T	■	A	T	E	I	N	■	R	E	D
C	R	O	S	S	W	O	R	D	■	O	R	E
■	■	■	E	C	O	■	L	E	S	S	O	N
S	E	C	T	O	R	■	S	A	M	S	■	■
O	U	R	■	T	S	P	■	R	U	R	A	L
P	R	O	D	■	T	A	M	■	T	O	N	E
H	O	S	E	D	■	Y	A	M	■	A	T	A
■	■	S	L	A	T	■	T	E	N	D	E	R
R	E	F	I	N	E	■	I	S	O	■	■	■
A	L	I	■	C	R	O	S	S	T	A	L	K
C	A	R	■	E	R	A	S	E	■	I	I	I
E	N	E	■	S	A	F	E	S	■	L	E	D

Yesterday's answer 2-23

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12				■	13			■	14			
15				16				■	17			
■	■	■	18			■	19	20				
21	22	23			■	24				■	■	■
25				■	26					27	28	29
30			■	31					■	32		
33			34					■	35			
■	■	■	36				■	37				
38	39	40				■	41			■	■	■
42				■	43	44				45	46	47
48				■	49			■	50			
51				■	52				53			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Dakota Fanning, 16; Kristin Davis, 45; Patricia Richardson, 59; Peter Fonda, 70

Happy Birthday: Emotional issues will capture your attention and you may miss out on some good opportunities because you are wrapped up in personal matters. Put your time and effort into getting ahead professionally and stop spinning your wheels trying to fight the inevitable. Change is necessary whether you want it or not, so get on with what needs to be done. Your numbers are 2, 8, 15, 23, 26, 33, 47

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Someone who wants to make you look bad will use the information you divulge against you. Problems with authority, institutions or neighbors can stand in your way. Address any issues that arise swiftly without revealing too much. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You may want to accommodate someone but, in the end, it will not help your emotional state of mind or your position. If something doesn't feel right to you, do not take part. Travel for business if it will help seal a deal. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You cannot change what has happened but you can put it behind you and start again. Too much of anything will turn into a bad thing. Don't disrupt what you've worked so hard to achieve. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Participation will be the key to getting ahead. Travel for business will be the deciding factor. A face-to-face meeting will ensure you are in the running for something you really want to take part in. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): If you pretend to know more than you do, it will lead to mistakes and a change of plans. Know who and what you are up against before you decide to challenge someone. Confidence, know-how and experience will win in the end. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Follow through with your plans or you will be criticized. Avoid taking anyone for granted by doing the work by yourself. Once you have proved that you are quite capable of going it alone, you will attract worthy partners who can contribute as much as you have. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Stick to the rules and regulations or you will face problems with superiors, institutions or agencies. Put your creative mind to work for you. Added responsibilities must not be allowed to hold you back. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): There is money to be made, deals to be signed and settlements to go after. Buying or selling property or investments will be to your benefit. An unusual collaboration will bring about a new interest that can turn into greater cash flow. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Expect to face opposition from friends, neighbors and relatives if you are not honest about your concerns and whereabouts. Inconsistency will be your downfall and will lead to changes in your personal life that you don't foresee. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't take anything for granted. What you expect to unfold will not, so stay alert and prepare for an unusual turn of events. If you are ready to be a participant, you can take advantage of a rare opportunity. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Your innovative, inventive outlook will take others by surprise and will drum up interest in your plans. Put your time, effort and cash into building a solid foundation for the future, replacing old habits that make your life repetitive and boring. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): What you think you are getting and what is actually being offered are not the same. Emotional problems will leave you unsure of what to do next. Don't make any moves that will disrupt your personal life. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are creative and inventive. You are sensitive, emotional, persuasive and persistent. You are determined to get things done.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		1	7				5	
				1	3	4		6
3				4	5		9	
2						3	4	
	5	4				7	1	
	3	7						8
	1		4	5				9
6		3	2	7				
	8				6	2		

Difficulty Level ★★ 2/23

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	7	2	9	1	5	3	6	8
6	1	5	3	2	8	4	9	7
3	8	9	4	6	7	2	5	1
1	2	8	7	5	6	9	4	3
7	4	6	8	3	9	1	2	5
5	9	3	1	4	2	7	8	6
8	5	7	2	9	3	6	1	4
2	6	1	5	7	4	8	3	9
9	3	4	6	8	1	5	7	2

Difficulty Level ★ 2/22

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

A PRICELESS SHIPWRECK **Solution: 9 letters**

W	V	E	G	R	U	S	P	A	R	K	L	I	N	G
E	E	S	S	M	E	G	A	S	S	A	P	O	A	E
A	S	A	N	T	R	E	A	T	D	E	S	R	M	O
L	S	I	T	E	N	I	O	C	W	O	E	A	I	L
T	E	L	(D)	H	K	N	N	T	R	E	O	N	B	O
H	L	O	(L)	C	E	N	E	A	C	E	D	G	I	G
U	E	R	(O)	S	R	R	U	N	M	E	V	E	A	I
D	R	R	(G)	H	E	H	A	S	R	D	T	I	M	S
N	U	S	C	R	S	S	D	E	P	I	E	S	R	T
E	T	I	O	I	S	N	E	A	L	I	S	B	O	N
G	R	Y	N	I	O	N	S	W	A	L	L	K	T	L
E	A	A	A	M	O	S	T	A	R	A	C	L	S	O
L	P	N	A	I	R	O	O	L	F	A	E	S	E	A
S	E	I	P	N	E	D	A	L	H	C	A	E	B	D
R	D	I	S	C	O	V	E	R	Y	V	A	E	H	S

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US hockey team, Miller earn big wins at Olympics

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP)—Bode Miller and the United States hockey team combined to make it a happy day at the Vancouver Olympics for the neighbors to the south, first winning the men's super-combined ski race and then dealing host Canada a surprising loss in the country's favorite sport.

Much of Canada stopped to watch the preliminary round hockey game against the Americans, but the hosts were left disappointed after a 5-3 loss and now their team needs to win an additional game just to make the quarterfinals. The United States, however, is poised to go into the next round as top-seeded team.

"We know we can beat anybody now," said Brian Rafalski, who scored two goals for the Americans and set up another.

In an early game, Russia beat the Czech Republic 4-2. Defending Olympic champion Sweden beat rival Finland 3-0 in the late game.

Earlier in the day, four-time Olympic medalist Miller finally earned a gold to complete his collection of jewelry from the Vancouver Games. After finishing seventh in the downhill run of the two-leg super-combi, Miller went all out in the slalom and bettered main rival Ivica Kostelic of Croatia with a winning time of 2 minutes, 44.92 seconds.

"I skied with 100 percent heart. I didn't hold anything back," Miller said. "It's just awesome. There's nothing else to say."

AP

USA's Brian Rafalski (28) is congratulated by Jamie Langenbrunner (15) and Joe Pavelski (16) after scoring a goal in the first period of a preliminary round men's ice hockey game against Canada at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Miller had been the most hyped athlete of the 2006 Turin Games, but left Italy empty-handed. Now, with expectations much lower, the 32-year-old American won a gold medal to add to the silver and bronze he has already claimed in the first two races in Whistler.

Andre Lange of Germany became the first driver with four Olympic gold medals after winning the two-man bobsled event. He and longtime brakeman Kevin Kuske completed their four runs in 3:26.65.

Lange, the defending Olympic champion in two- and four-man, surpassed Meinhard Nehmer of Germany for the most bobsled golds. Lange also won the four-man event at the 2002 Salt Lake Games.

"This has been a long career for me, many years of fighting and hoping, racing and medals, which is now nearly over," Lange said. "For me it's a really happy end. I didn't really expect to win here."

In biathlon, World Cup leader Evgeny Ustyugov of Russia won the men's 15-kilometer mass start race. Ustyugov shot cleanly and finished in 35:35.7. Also, Magdalena Neuner of Germany won the women's 12.5K mass start for her second gold medal of the Vancouver Games.

"I knew I could win a medal, but now I have three," said Neuner, who also won the 10K pursuit on Tuesday and took silver in the 7.5K sprint in her first Olympics. "That's incredible."

Ireen Wust of the Netherlands turned her bronze from Turin to gold in Vancouver by winning the women's 1,500-meter speedskating race, and Michael Schmid of Switzerland won the inaugural Olympic men's ski-cross event.

Miller also won two silver medals at the 2002 Salt Lake City Games, and his fifth Olympic medal overall added to his status as the most decorated American Alpine skier in history.

"The way I executed, the way I skied, is something I'll be proud of the rest of my life," Miller said.

Kostelic took silver behind Miller and Silvan Zurbriggen of Switzerland claimed bronze. Aksel Lund Svindal, who won gold in the super-G and silver in the downhill, led the super-combi after the opening leg, but he skied out of the slalom leg.

"I think slalom skiers for sure wouldn't have a great chance if the slalom course was simple," Kostelic said. "The setting was quite demanding, but not as demanding as it could be. But demanding enough so that the slalom skiers could make up time."

The mother of Canadian figure skater Joannie Rochette died Sunday, two days before Rochette is to begin competition. She still plans to compete, and practiced only a few hours after hearing the news.

In curling, Canada's women's team beat the United States 9-2 to stay unbeaten, and Britain skip Eve Muirhead pounded a stone in frustration after giving up a four-spot to Switzerland in a 10-6 shortened nine end loss. It was Britain's third straight loss following a promising Olympic start.

Sluggers Pujols, Holliday arrive at Cardinals camp

JUPITER, Fla. (AP)—For the first time in several springs, Albert Pujols has peace of mind. Reconstructive elbow surgery no longer hangs over his head.

Last year's unanimous NL MVP had a half-dozen bone spurs removed from his chronically troublesome right elbow during offseason surgery. When he awoke, doctors told him it was likely he'll never have to undergo reconstructive surgery. That had been a possibility since 2003.

Pre- and postoperative consultation with Dr. James Andrews and Dr. George Paletta, the team physician, eased any worries.

"I told Dr. Paletta and Dr. Andrews 'If you go in there and you see something different from the test, go ahead and get it done,'" Pujols said Sunday. "They didn't. It's good news to hear Dr. Andrews tell me that probably you will never have to worry about having the Tommy John (surgery)."

The three-time MVP, however, is getting tired talking about a contract extension.

Pujols has a year remaining on a seven-year, $100 million contract, plus the Cardinals have an option for 2011. The 30-year-old Pujols has consistently said there's no hurry for a new deal.

"It's getting to the point that it's getting irritating to talk about my contract," Pujols said. "Let's wait until something happens, and then we're going to have all the answers and you can throw every question you want.

"As of right now, man, I don't want to talk about it because I'm so sick and tired of everybody talking about my contract or writing about my contract every time," he said.

Pujols said he's not about to walk into the offices of chairman Bill DeWitt Jr. or general manager John Mozeliak to talk about a contract.

"That's why I have my agent, and things are going to work out," Pujols said.

Pujols and Matt Holliday both hit the field for the first time on Sunday, two days ahead of the first full-squad workout. That's peace of mind for manager Tony La Russa, who joked, "We got better today, didn't we?"

Pujols brought his family, including two-week-old son Ezra, anxious to swap snowy St. Louis for mid-70s temperatures at the team's spring training complex in south Florida.

Holliday showed up not to knock off rust but to hit the ground running.

"I come in ready to get after it," Holliday said. "The first at-bat of the first game, I'll be expecting results. It's probably not a good idea but I'm here to compete."

Both players had sessions with new hitting instructor Mark McGwire, and were eager to work with the former home run king. Holliday already had a good idea of McGwire's approach after he and fifth-place hitter Ryan Ludwick spent two days with Big Mac in Austin, Texas, last month.

Pujols was a rookie in 2001, McGwire's last season, and said he might have been too shy or too reluctant to invade the veterans' space that year.

"We talked a little bit about things I did toward the end of last year, things that I saw in my videotape," Pujols said. "Now I'm going to take advantage and talk to him about hitting because I love that."

Pujols has been hitting and throwing for six weeks and said the elbow was 95 percent healed. The elbow has bothered him off and on since the 2003 season when he was a left fielder and La Russa instructed shortstop Edgar Renteria to trot out into the outfield to collect underhand tosses to keep Pujols' bat in the lineup.

He arrives at camp with no limitations, except to convince himself not to try to do too much too soon. Talking about the extension in his swing brings a smile, along with the memory of what used to be.

"You take six bone spurs almost as big as your pinkie fingernail and you know, that's pretty huge," Pujols said. "Some of those pieces, I remember Dr. Andrews and Dr. Paletta said 'I can't believe how you swing with these things,' so I'm pretty excited.

"I'm going to try to play pain-free and hopefully I'll stay like that."

La Russa guessed that Pujols had "significant pain" in more than half of his seasons.

"That's part of his greatness," La Russa said. "He's not oblivious to it but he deals with it."

Pujols blames himself for being "such a hard head" and refusing days off. He said his elbow bothered him a lot the first six weeks last season, but he didn't want to make any excuses.

After all, he batted .327 and led the NL in homers (47), runs (124), on-base percentage (.443), slugging percentage (.658) and intentional walks (44). The homer count is a career best, even though he had none after Sept. 9.

Bringing up the homer drought remains a surefire way to rile Pujols.

"If I would have been striking out and hitting ground balls and popping the ball up, then I'd be concerned," Pujols said. "But I don't recall those things happening."

Holliday spurred the Cardinals to a runaway NL Central title after arriving in mid-July, with 55 RBIs and a .353 average in 63 games. He signed a seven-year, $120 million free agent deal in January, and vowed Sunday that it wouldn't change his game.

"I have expectations of myself whether I'm making the league minimum or whatever," Holliday said. "I expect to do well, that's how I look at it."

Howard powers Magic to 101-95 win over Cavs

ORLANDO, Florida (AP)—Dwight Howard had 22 points and 16 rebounds in a bruising battle with Shaquille O'Neal as the Orlando Magic beat Cleveland 101-95 on Sunday to hand the Cavaliers their first three-game losing streak in two years.

Cleveland's skid comes on the heels of a 13-game win streak.

Howard was 8-for-13 shooting and added four blocks, and Vince Carter had eight of his 11 points in the fourth quarter to help the Magic beat Cleveland for the first time this season.

O'Neal made his first eight shots and finished with 20 points, and LeBron James had 33 points and nine rebounds for the Cavaliers, who were eliminated by Orlando in last year's Eastern Conference finals.

AP

Orlando Magic center Dwight Howard, right, puts up a shot in front of Cleveland Cavaliers center Shaquille O'Neal, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Orlando, Fla., Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010.

Nuggets 114, Celtics 105

At Denver, J.R. Smith scored 16 of his 19 points in the fourth quarter as Denver recovered to beat Boston after blowing an early 20-point lead.

Chauncey Billups had 26 points and Carmelo Anthony added 23 for the Nuggets, who avoided back-to-back losses for the first time since late December with the victory over the NBA's top road team.

Ray Allen had 25 points and Kevin Garnett, Rajon Rondo and Marquis Daniels added 15 points apiece for the Celtics, who lost for the first time in their last four road games. They remain an NBA-best 20-10 away from home.

Thunder 109, Timberwolves 107

At Minneapolis, Kevin Durant scored 32 points to extend his streak of games with at least 25 points to 28 as Oklahoma City edged Minnesota for its ninth straight win.

Russell Westbrook had a triple-double with 22 points, 10 rebounds and 14 assists, and Jeff Green added 17 points and 14 rebounds for the Thunder.

Jonny Flynn and Kevin Love each had 19 points for the Timberwolves, who have dropped five in a row.

Durant scoring streak surpasses Allen Iverson's 27-game streak in 2001. It's the longest since Michael Jordan had 40 straight games of 25 or more points in the 1986-87 season.

Jazz 93, Trail Blazers 89, OT

At Portland, Oregon, Carlos Boozer scored on an offensive putback at the end of regulation to force overtime, then gave Utah its first lead since the opening minutes as the Jazz rallied from down 25 in the third quarter to stun Portland.

Boozer had 22 points and a career-high 23 rebounds for the Jazz, who trailed 64-39 with 7 minutes left in the third quarter. They outscored the Blazers 44-19 over the final 19 minutes to send it to overtime.

Brandon Roy led Portland with 23 points and Marcus Camby had 18 rebounds.

Deron Williams added 18 points and 12 assists for the Jazz.

Pistons 109, Spurs 101, OT

At Auburn Hills, Michigan, Richard Hamilton scored 27 points and Rodney Stuckey added 20 and Detroit held on for the win after trailing to start overtime.

Manu Ginobili's layup tied the game at 93-93 with 27.5 seconds left, and the Pistons missed two game-winning shots at the end of regulation.

Tim Duncan had 29 points and 10 rebounds for the Spurs.

Grizzlies 104, Nets 94

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Rudy Gay scored 29 points as Memphis added another exclamation point to a frustrating season for New Jersey, rallying from an 18-point first-half deficit for the win.

O.J. Mayo scored 10 of his 24 points in a 17-point run that bridged the third and fourth quarters and put the Grizzlies ahead for good, adding to the woes of the Nets (5-51).

Zach Randolph added 18 points and 10 rebounds and Marc Gasol tallied 14 of his 16 points in the second half for Memphis.

Brook Lopez had 26 points to lead the Nets, who led 36-20 after their highest-scoring first quarter of the season.

Warriors 108, Hawks 104

At Oakland, California, Stephen Curry scored 32 points and made the go-ahead free throw in the final minute after a technical foul on Jamal Crawford to help Golden State edge Atlanta.

Monta Ellis scored 26 for the Warriors, who got their first win against a team with a winning record since beating Boston on Dec. 28.

Joe Johnson led Atlanta with 31 points, Al Horford added 26 and Josh Smith had 14 points and 17 rebounds. The Hawks have lost three of four.

Suns 104, Kings 88

At Phoenix, Jason Richardson scored 26 points, Amare Stoudemire had 19 points and 14 rebounds, and Steve Nash had 17 assists as Phoenix completed a season series sweep of Sacramento.

Newly acquired Carl Landry led Sacramento with 18 points. Beno Udrih had 17 and Donte Greene and rookie Tyreke Evans each scored 16 for the Kings.

The Kings began the season 9-8, but since then they are 9-30. They are 5-25 on the road and have lost nine straight in Phoenix.

Hornets 102, Rockets 94

At New Orleans, David West scored 27 points, including four in the final 2 minutes, to lift New Orleans to the win.

Darren Collison added 26 points for New Orleans, the fifth straight game he's had 24 or more.

Chase Budinger scored 18 points and Aaron Brooks added 15 for Houston, which has dropped two straight.

Poulter gets a signature victory

MARANA, Ariz. (AP)—Despite eight European Tour victories and a 5-2 record in two Ryder Cup appearances, mention Ian Poulter to the casual golf fan and the conversation would start with his wardrobe.

The Union Jack trousers he once wore at a major. Colors that are found in a bag of Skittles. When he wore a bright aqua shade earlier this week at the Match Play Championship, he made sure half of his shoes were the same color, along with the print on his sponsor logos.

The highlight of every evening is ironing his clothes, most of which he designs.

"For me it's a business, and one that I'm very passionate about," Poulter said. "And I take pride and care on how I present myself on the golf course. And a lot of people haven't really seen it that way over the last few years."

That might be about to change.

Dressed in a soft pink outfit for a chilly day in the high desert, Poulter collected the biggest win of his career Sunday in the Match Play Championship. With a stellar short game and unusual calm, he led over the final 28 holes and beat Paul Casey, 4 and 2.

It was an all-England final in the first World Golf Championship of the year, yet among the most significant achievements for Poulter was winning for the first time on American soil.

"It's been a long time coming," Poulter said. "Five or six years of hard work, coming over to change my residency, to be living in America, to finally win over here ... it means everything. And it's just so pleasing to be able to finally say now I'm a winner on the PGA Tour."

Casey already is a PGA Tour winner—he won the Houston Open last year—but Match Play is becoming a burden. He became the first player in the 12-year history of his tournament to lose consecutive years in the championship matches.

He didn't have much of a chance either time.

A year ago, Geoff Ogilvy built a 3-up lead after the morning 18 holes on his way to a 4-and-3 victory. Poulter seized command on the back nine of the morning session by winning three holes in a four-hole stretch, then settled for a 2-up lead at the turn.

Momentum was on Casey's side at lunch. The start of the second 18 didn't taste so well.

Poulter birdied the first two holes to go 4 up, and while Casey cut that lead in half with eight holes to play, he never got closer. The last good chance appeared to come at the 15th, when both drove into a collection area right of the green on the 307-yard hole, with Poulter facing the more difficult shot. He had to go straight up a steep slope with about 15 feet of green. And he had mud on his ball.

"I had to hit that shot absolutely perfect," Poulter said. "And I didn't actually see what happened, but it finished a couple of inches from the hole. It was perfect. That's one of the nicest shots I've played in a while."

That put him 3 up with three to play, and Poulter closed out Casey with a par on the 16th.

Casey could have attributed his play to fatigue. Before he reached the final, he had to finish his semifinal match against Camilo Villegas early Sunday morning. Villegas hooked his opening tee shot into the desert, and Casey won with a par to win in 24 holes.

AP

Ian Poulter, of England, holds the champions trophy after his 4 and 2 victory over Paul Casey in the finals of the Match Play Championship golf tournament Sunday, Feb. 21, 2010, in Marana, Ariz.

Villegas, equipped with a new attitude to not be so hard on himself, rebounded to whip Sergio Garcia in the consolation match, 5 and 4.

Casey spent ample time talking about shots that didn't go where he was aiming, which usually is a problem in golf. Perhaps the most damaging came at the par-5 13th, when he had a 7-iron to the green for his second shot and missed it badly.

But he knew the biggest reason he lost.

"Ian played great stuff," Casey said. "He did what he needed to do today. I think he kept it in play on every single hole, which is pretty impressive around here, and made a lot of clutch putts He's putting very, very well."

Poulter gave credit to a new lob wedge with a little more bounce to help the ball come out a little higher, one of the adjustments he has made for new grooves. It helped him on delicate shots, such as behind the 13th green in the morning session, behind the 12th green in the afternoon, and the sensational wedge on the 15th that effectively gave him the tournament and the $1.4 million prize.

"I would say my short game, certainly this week, has been as good as it's ever been," Poulter said. "The last 12 months, it's been up there with the best of them."

Perhaps it was only fitting that he posed with a WGC trophy named the "Walter Hagen Cup."

Hagen, among golf's greatest players with 11 majors, was regarded as much for his snappy attire as his record four straight PGA Championships when they were match play.

The Haig would have liked this spunky Englishman.

"Are you saying I'm a snappy dresser?" Poulter asked with a grin.

That's a matter of taste. As for his short game? It had no match at Dove Mountain.

Registration on for women's caging

Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands will be holding a registration for the 2010 Women's Basketball League for three days beginning this Thursday.

Registration for Feb. 25 will start at 5:30pm at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. Interested female players who will not make it to the first day of the registration have two more chances to sign up, first on March 6 at 9am and on March 7 at 1pm, still at the Ada gym.

Players who will register will be eligible to play to in the women's caging. Registration is free and is open to female players in the 15-and-above age group.

On the last day of registration, organizers will select captains for each participating team. BANMI is looking to have at least four teams. Players will be drafted and each squad is allowed to have 10 members.

Besides the registration, BANMI will also conduct basketball session for three days to help prepare interested players for the league.

For more information, contact Women's Basketball Association president Connie Camacho at 287-4824 or via e-mail at concam7@yahoo.com or Gabriel White at 234-6548 or via e-mail at awaawaa@hotmail.com. ***(PR)***

SSC-TSUNAMI

From Page 28

Choi, and Albert and Dooyong Lee.

The 50m butterfly had only eight participants in SSC's Villagomez, Chentsova and Kento Akimaru and Tsunami's Hiroto and Kaito Yanai, Takumi Sugie, Thea Minor, and Kensuke Kimura.

The second part of the dual meet featured three events: 50mbackstroke, 200m backstroke, and 100m breaststroke. The 50m backstroke drew the most participants with 30 and they were divided into eight heats.

In the 200m backstroke, it was Kimball siblings—Andrew and Grace—against Kensuke Kimura, who as expected completed the race first. The 100m breaststroke had another siblings show with Kaisei and Ryosei Toda battling Tan and Akimaru.

The third and last part of the dual meet had the 100m freestyle, 200m breaststroke, 1,500m freestyle, and 50m freestyle. The last event of the day—the 50m freestyle—had 11 heats and lured 41 participants with the CNMI's top swimmer in sprints—Kai Staal—in the final heat joining Kensuke and Shin Kimura and Kaisei Toda.

Tsunami Saipan and SSC had the same event in April last year with swimmers from both clubs making records.

SSC's Maxi Braig, who had already left the island, set records in the 50m and 100m freestyle swim after timing in at 32.34 seconds and 1:11.57, respectively, last year.

Braig's time in the 50m broke Joshua Taitano's 32.55 posted on Jan. 4, 1992. Braig's 100m freesyle time shattered another Taitano mark (1:12.01) made on the same date.

Tsunami's Kensuke Kimura eclipsed the old marks in the 800m freestyle and 200m breaststroke (11 to 12 age group), Staal made records in the 50m backstroke (15 to 16 age group), and Ryosei Toda set marks in the 100m and 200m freestyle and 100m breaststroke (8-and-under). Hiroto Yanai broke the record in the 50m freestyle, while older brother Kaito posted a new mark in the 200m individual medley.

TSL A's

From Page 28

Survivors 14, Northern 13

In the other Juniors division game, J.J. Cabrera reached home plate on Northern Juniors' miscues to power Survivors to a 14-13 win.

Cabrera was the leadoff batter for Survivors at the bottom of the seventh inning and hit his target with the Northern shortstop struggling to pick up the ball. When Northern did and fielded it to the team's catcher, the ball was lost again, allowing Cabrera to run to second, then third, and finally to home plate.

SENIORS
Ol'Aces 6, Hustlers 2

In the Seniors division, Ol'Aces topped the Hustlers in the low-scoring game, 6-2.

Ol'Aces' defense allowed the Hustlers to score only in the second and fourth inning. Manuel Flores gave Hustlers their first run in the second inning on an Ol'Aces error, while Timothy Rabago's double drove home McJay Espina in the fourth inning.

Harry Nakamura started Ol'Aces' offense with a two-run homer at the bottom of the first and after being shut out in the next two innings, Ol'Aces broke the spell and scored four more runs, three off Hustlers' miscues.

Lions 13, Hunters 1

The Kagman Lions recorded a lopsided 13-1 victory over the Hunters.

Greg Iskawa pitched two innings, allowed no hits, and struck out three, giving the Lions a 3-0 lead after three innings. The Lions widened the gap with a seven-run bottom of the third, highlighted by center fielder Leo Blas' three-run homer.

The Hunters' lone run came from Leroy Regis off a Lions' error at the top of the fourth.

MAJORS
Ol'Aces 4, Red Sox 2

J.J. Eina pitched in no relief and struck out 11 to lift Ol'Aces to a 4-2 win.

The victory was the defending champions' second in as many games.

Jessie Brel went 2-for-4 at bat and scored two runs and one RBI. The rest of Ol'Aces runs were off Red Sox's errors.

Twins 13, Enforcers 2

Rob Tenorio and P.J. Sablan had three RBIs each, leading the Twins to a 13-2 triumph over the JPO Enforcers.

Tenorio was perfect at the plate, hitting 3-for-3 and also scored three runs. Sablan had the same performance at bat and logged one triple and two runs.

Strikers 7, IT&E 6

Pery Celis reached home plate on a passed ball for the Striker's 7-6 win over IT&E.

IT&E took control of the match after a four-run top of the third, 5-4, but failed to hang in there when it did not score in the last two innings.

Celis' double at the bottom of the sixth drove Piling Terlaje home and tied the game, 6-all. The Strikers next two batters were struck out, while Celis was left to third base and Justin Joyner to first. Marcos Camacho was at the plate, getting ready for the pitch when relief pitcher Ruwen Tudela made a passed ball, giving Celis time to run to home plate for the win.

FOOTBALL

From Page 28

NMIFA president Jerry Tan and other officials of the association received the donation from SYFL commissioner and Rep. Joe Palacios. Others present to witness the ceremony were SYFL adviser Karl Reyes, SYFL president Alex Sablan, treasurer Nora Sablan, former president Charles Cepeda, former football coach Jay Santos, NMIFA vice president Vickie Izuka, NMIFA general secretary Ed Salas, and NMIFA treasurer Elna Curate.

"The organization (SYFL) is dissolving after years of inactivity and instead of just letting the funds dry up or stay in the bank, we decided to use it to a worthier cause," Alex Sablan said.

"We are likely to donate over $16,000 to various sports organization, but these funds are only available for youth programs," Nora Sablan added.

Tan, on behalf of NMIFA, thanked SYFL and its officials for choosing NMIFA as one of its beneficiaries.

"I am a bit speechless. NMIFA is used to donating funds/equipment to various schools/organizations, but now, here you are, giving us a very big donation, which will be very helpful to our youth program. Rest assured that we will exclusively utilize these funds for the development of our youth players," Tan said.

Salas said the donation is timely, as NMIFA will open the 2010 season of its youth league on March 6. Salas added the donation may be used in bringing in coaches to conduct clinics and other skill-development activities for youth players.

Reyes said they decided to give donation to various sports organizations which are not getting help from the government.

"We see ourselves in them (sports organizations) when we started the league in 1993. We even had to rely on our own pocket to buy equipment and get the league going for our youth. We have parents and volunteer coaches helping out, as funds and other resources from the government were not available," Reyes said.

Reyes, who co-founded the league with Post Masters Steve Lizama, remembered how the league started with four teams and then the number grew as the years past by, making the football league bigger than the little league baseball. However, when volunteers, coaches, and players started leaving the island, SYFL started to slow down and was active for the last time in 2003

"It was a struggle, but through the help of parents, volunteers, and the private sector, the league were able to provide a venue for our youth to excel in football," Palacios added.

AON

From Page 28

In the first game, World Resort stretched its winning run to three after whipping the debuting Saipan Grand Hotel/ Docomo Pacific.

World Resort leaned on a balance offense to give SGH/Docomo a rude welcome in the 15-team league. The Advance X-Terminator-backed World Resort drew double figures from seven players with James Wabinga leading the way with 20 points. Juluis Tabamo chipped in 19, Dennis Vinas added 17, Condrad Espiritu and Wowie Abuel had 14 apiece, and Mike Olaitiman and Marlon Pineda contributed12 and 11, respectively.

Wabinga knocked down eight points in the first quarter, leading World Resort to a 26-17 lead. The lead ballooned in the ensuing quarters, as SGH/Docomo lacked manpower to keep pace with World Resort's offensive power.

Ricky Bustillos paced SGH/Docomo with 25 points, while Gerald Maliwanag drilled in 24.

In the second game, AON trailed by as much as 13 points in the second quarter before Jorge De Guzman anchored a rally in the last three minutes of the third period.

De Guzman made 10 of his 28 points in the third canto, turning a 42-47 deficit to a 76-70 advantage, entering the final canto.

With AON in the driver's seat, De Guzman finally had a chance to take a breather in the early goings of the fourth canto, leaving Leo Factor the task to keep the team's momentum. Factor rose to the occasion and logged 11 of his 31 points in the final quarter to complete AON's come-from-behind win.

Hard Rock threatened to make its own recovery when Jun Mendoza drilled back-to-back treys with less than two minutes left in the game, cutting the lead to five, 90-95. However, two free throws from De Guzman and one each from Emir Abuan and Factor sealed the win for AON and handed Hard Rock its third loss in as many matches.

First Game

World Resort 118 – Wabinga 20, Tabamo 19, Vinas 17, Abuel 14, Espiritu 14, Olaitiman 12, Pineda 11, Aquino 7, Ritual 4.

SGH/Docomo 81 – Bustillos 25, Maliwanag 24, Villacrusis 15, Lee 13, Cho 2, Alvarez 2.

Scoring by quarters: 26-17, 50-34, 81-50, 118-81.

Second Game

AON 101 – Factor 31, De Guzman 28, Catalla 15, De Dios 10, Pantola 9, Abuan 8.

Hard Rock 92 – Tengco 29, Paraiso 25, Mendoza 14, Nunag 6, Lagrio 5, Daprosa 5, Besmonte 4, Tiamzon 2, Alcantara 2.

Scoring by quarters: 17-23, 42-47, 76-70, 101-92.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	35	19	.648	–
Toronto	31	24	.564	4 1/2
Philadelphia	21	34	.382	14 1/2
New York	19	35	.352	16
New Jersey	5	51	.089	31

Southeast Division

Orlando	38	19	.667	–
Atlanta	34	20	.630	2 1/2
Miami	29	28	.509	9
Charlotte	27	27	.500	9 1/2
Washington	19	34	.358	17

Central Division

Cleveland	43	14	.754	–
Chicago	29	26	.527	13
Milwaukee	26	28	.481	15 1/2
Detroit	20	35	.364	22
Indiana	19	36	.345	23

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	35	21	.625	–
San Antonio	31	23	.574	3
New Orleans	30	26	.536	5
Houston	28	27	.509	6 1/2
Memphis	28	27	.509	6 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	37	19	.661	–
Utah	36	19	.655	1/2
Oklahoma City	33	21	.611	3
Portland	32	26	.552	6
Minnesota	13	44	.228	24 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	42	14	.750	–
Phoenix	34	23	.596	8 1/2
L.A. Clippers	22	33	.400	19 1/2
Sacramento	18	38	.321	24
Golden State	16	39	.291	25 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Orlando 101, Cleveland 95
Denver 114, Boston 105
Detroit 109, San Antonio 101, OT
Memphis 104, New Jersey 94
Oklahoma City 109, Minnesota 107
New Orleans 102, Houston 94
Golden State 108, Atlanta 104
Phoenix 104, Sacramento 88
Utah 93, Portland 89, OT

NBA LEADERS

SCORING

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
James, CLE	56	566	442	1677	29.9
Durant, OKC	53	519	461	1578	29.8
Anthony, DEN	42	418	354	1231	29.3
Bryant, LAL	51	527	302	1426	28.0
Wade, MIA	55	508	365	1436	26.1
Ellis, GOL	49	496	227	1265	25.8
Nowitzki, DAL	55	485	360	1360	24.7
Bosh, TOR	53	463	368	1300	24.5
Johnson, ATL	53	448	149	1137	21.5
Stoudemire, PHX	56	450	297	1197	21.4
Jackson, CHA	54	417	226	1145	21.2
Randolph, MEM	54	445	206	1103	20.4
Lee, NYK	54	461	173	1095	20.3
Maggette, GOL	50	324	355	1013	20.3
Evans, SAC	50	368	248	1010	20.2
Gay, MEM	52	396	203	1036	19.9
Rose, CHI	55	460	166	1092	19.9
Kaman, LAC	49	400	166	966	19.7
Boozer, UTA	51	397	194	988	19.4
Brooks, HOU	54	368	174	1046	19.4

FG PERCENTAGE

	FG	FGA	PCT
Perkins, BOS	230	377	.610
Howard, ORL	337	559	.603
Hilario, DEN	292	495	.590
Gasol, MEM	297	509	.583
Millsap, UTA	255	440	.580
Bynum, LAL	320	563	.568
Horford, ATL	299	528	.566
Haywood, DAL	207	369	.561
Lee, NYK	461	826	.558
O'Neal, CLE	241	432	.558

REBOUNDS

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, ORL	56	201	552	753	13.4
Camby, POR	52	168	455	623	12.0
Noah, CHI	47	177	377	554	11.8
Randolph, MEM	54	232	403	635	11.8
Lee, NYK	54	141	476	617	11.4
Bosh, TOR	53	159	446	605	11.4
Duncan, SAN	50	167	382	549	11.0
Boozer, UTA	51	103	455	558	10.9
Wallace, CHA	52	107	453	560	10.8
Bogut, MIL	48	149	343	492	10.3

ASSISTS

	G	AST	AVG
Paul, NOR	38	424	11.2
Nash, PHX	56	621	11.1
Williams, UTA	49	485	9.9
Rondo, BOS	52	503	9.7
Kidd, DAL	55	506	9.2
James, CLE	56	473	8.4
Davis, LAC	53	414	7.8
Westbrook, OKC	53	400	7.5
Wade, MIA	55	352	6.4
Duhon, NYK	54	332	6.1

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

SHIRLEY'S CAGING STANDINGS

MBI	3	0
World Resort	3	0
Fiesta Resort	2	0
Aqua Resort	2	0
TBK	2	1
Shirley's	2	1
Pacific Islands Club	1	0
Mobil	1	1
Pepsi	1	2
AON/NJ Plus	1	2
Docomo/SGH	0	1
McGraw-Hill	0	2
Bank of Guam	0	2
Cell Pro	0	3
Hard Rock	0	3

2010 Wise Woman Village Coconut Classic Tennis

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Tiffany Madlambayan goes for a return against Amy Tsukagoshi during their game in the girls' 10-and-under singles division of the 2010 Wise Woman Village Coconut Classic Tennis at the American Memorial Park tennis court.

Todd Montgomery, who teamed up with Colin Ramsey, returns to Peter Loyola and Amami Sakano during their mixed-up doubles finals.

Ayumi Cajigan prepares to serve.

Kennedy Izuka serves during his and teammate Ayumi Cajigan's game against Malika Miyawaki and Nathan Nutting in the mixed-up doubles.

Malika Miyawaki, left, serves, while teammate Nathan Nutting looks on during their mixed-up doubles game against Kennedy Izuka and Ayumi Cajigan.

Gary Ramsey makes a return near the net while teammate Negahr Rastguiy waits at the backline during their game against Roy Pangelinan and Moris Villanueva in the mixed-up doubles.

Carol Lee has her eyes on the ball during her game against Tammy Ackerman in the girls' 10-and-under singles finals.

Gabrielle Race serves against Emily Jones during their game in the girls' 14-and-under division.

Colin Ramsey looks at the ball he releases during his and Todd Montgomery's title game against Peter Loyola and Amami Sakano.

Players sit at the bleachers, waiting for the awards ceremony for the 2010 Wise Woman Village Coconut Classic Tennis at the American Memorial Park tennis court.

Registration on for women's caging

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Sports

US hockey team, Miller earn big wins at Olympics

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SSC-Tsunami meet draws nearly 60 swimmers

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan swimming finally plunged back into the action after almost a year of not having a tournament via the Saipan Swim Club- Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan dual meet held on Saturday at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

The one-day tournament, which also served as a virtual meet, drew nearly 60 swimmers from the two clubs, having participants as young as six years old. The dual virtual meet featured 12 events and results will be sent to Japan for comparison and rankings. Complete results were unavailable at press time, but once compiled, they will be entered in the CNM swim record books if new marks are made in various age groups.

The 12 events were 50m, 100m, 200m, 400m, and 1,500m freestyle, 50m, 100m, and 200m backstroke, 50m, 100m, and 200m breaststroke, and 50m butterfly. The tournament started at 3pm and was scheduled to conclude at 6pm.

The meet began with the 400m freestyle in the 10 to 13 age group with SSC's Victoria Chentsova and Andrew Kimball racing against Tsunami's Kaisei and Kosei Toda. Next up was the 200m freestyle with SSC's Bryce Daly beating Tsunami's Takumi Sugie.

Tsunami's Kensuke Kimura completed the 100m backstroke ahead of two female SSC swimmers, Keanna Villagomez and Grace Kimball.

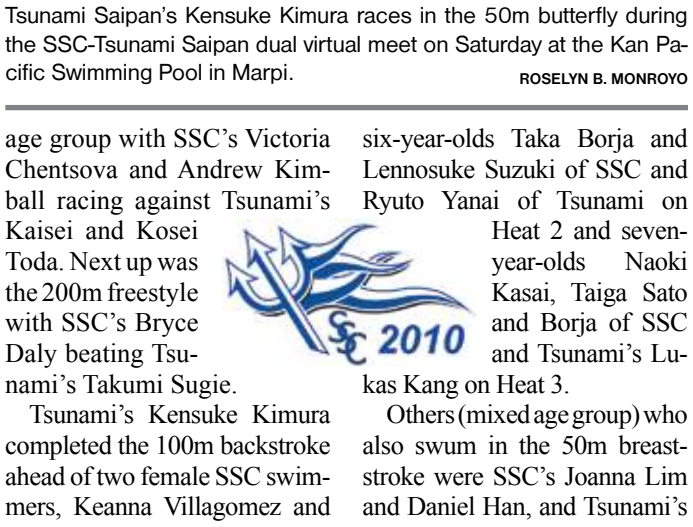
The 50m breaststroke was divided into five heats with six-year-olds Taka Borja and Lennosuke Suzuki of SSC and Ryuto Yanai of Tsunami on Heat 2 and seven-year-olds Naoki Kasai, Taiga Sato and Borja of SSC and Tsunami's Lukas Kang on Heat 3.

Others (mixed age group) who also swum in the 50m breaststroke were SSC's Joanna Lim and Daniel Han, and Tsunami's Monika Kang, Rena Son, Angel Marie Tan, Ryosei Toda, Steven

See SSC-TSUNAMI on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan Swim Club's Taiga Sato competes in the 50m backstroke event during the SSC-Tsunami Saipan dual virtual meet on Saturday at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.



Tsunami Saipan's Kensuke Kimura races in the 50m butterfly during the SSC-Tsunami Saipan dual virtual meet on Saturday at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

TSL A's recover, tame Lions

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Tan Siu Lin Athletics recovered from their debut loss with a 13-5 victory over the Kagman Lions in the Junior League game in the 2010 Saipan Little League Baseball on Sunday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

The A's lost to the Survivors, 2-5, during the first weekend of the SLLB but the former regained their winning form early with an easy victory over the Lions.

Jared Lizama started on the mound for the A's, pitched for 4.1 innings before returning midway in the sixth. In the first four innings, he struck out four, walked two, gave up only one run, and allowed only one hit.

After five complete innings, the A's were up, 7-1, scoring five runs off the Lions' errors. Kagman picked up the scoring in the last two innings, but these were not enough to bail them out of trouble, as the Lions erratic defense allowed the A's to add six more runs.

A's shortstop David Ada went 3-for-4 at bat, scored three runs, had two RBIs, and made one triple. Lizama was 2-for-5 and chipped in two runs. David Muna and Jacob Tomokane also had two runs each.

See TSL A's on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

TSL A's pitcher in action during their debut game against Survivors in the Junior League division of the SLLB. The A's lost but recovered on Sunday with a 13-5 win over the Kagman Lions.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

AON/NJ Plus' Randy Catalla is sandwiched by two Hard Rock Café defenders in a fastbreak play during their game in the Shirley's caging on Saturday at the JP Center Basketball Court.

Football league donates 5K to NMIFA

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan Youth Football League is folding up in style, donating its remaining funds to various sports organizations.

First to benefit from SYFL's generosity was Northern Mariana Islands Football Association, which received a $5,000 check donation from the latter. The check presentation was done yesterday at the NMIFA office at the TSL Plaza in Garapan.

See FOOTBALL on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan Youth Football League commissioner Joe Palacios, fifth left, hands the $5,000 check donation to NMIFA president Jerry Tan, fifth right, during a brief ceremony yesterday at the TSL Plaza. Joining them in the group photo are other NMIFA and SYFL officials.

AON books first win; World Resort on a roll

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

A depleted AON/NJ Pro Plus pulled off a come-from-behind win, while World Resort/Advance X-Terminator cruised to its third straight victory in the 2nd Annual Shirley's Coffee Shop Invitational Basketball League on Saturday at the JP Center Basketball Court.

AON, which played with only six players, stole the driver's seat from Hard Rock Café in the closing minutes of the third canto en route to a 101-92 victory. The win snapped AON's two-game losing skid.

See AON on Page 26